SABIAN MYSTERIES

A SPIRITUAL APPROACH TO ASTROLOGY

JAMES BURGESS

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The several strands that are woven into this cosmology feature the inspiration of the three mystics who gave us Sabian Symbols:

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Their work has been reinterpreted from the philosophical perspective of Western Sufism, particularly that coming through Hazrat Inayat Khan and Nigel Hamilton.

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James Burgess

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ARIES		TAURUS
Woman rises out of water; a seal rises and embraces her	01	A clear mountain stream
Comedian entertaining a group	02	An electrical storm
Cameo profile of a man in the outline of his country	03	Steps up to a lawn blooming with clover
Two lovers strolling through a secluded walk	04	The rainbow's pot of gold
Triangle with wings	05	A widow at an open grave
A square brightly lighted on one side	06	A bridge being built across a gorge
Man successfully expressing himself in two realms at once	07	A woman of Samaria
Large hat with streamers flying, facing east	08	A sleigh without snow
Crystal gazer	09	A Christmas tree decorated
Man teaching new forms for old symbols	10	A Red Cross nurse
President of the country	11	A woman sprinkling flowers
Flock of wild geese	12	Window shoppers
Unsuccessful bomb explosion	13	A man handling baggage
Serpent coiling near man and woman	14	Shellfish groping and children playing
Indian weaving a blanket	15	A man muffled up with a rakish silk hat
Brownies dancing in the setting Sun	16	Old man attempting vainly to reveal mysteries
Two prim spinsters	17	Battle between swords and torches
An empty hammock	18	A woman holding a bag out of a window
A magic carpet	19	A newly formed continent
Young girl feeding birds in winter	20	Wind, clouds and haste
Pugilist entering the ring	21	A finger pointing in an open book
Gate to the garden of desire	22	White dove over troubled waters
Woman in pastel colours carrying heavy and valuable veiled load	23	Jewellery shop
Open window and net curtain blowing into a cornucopia	24	A mounted Indian with scalp locks
A double promise	25	A large well-kept public park
Man possessed of more gifts than he can hold	26	A Spaniard serenading his senorita
Lost opportunity regained in imagination	27	Old native woman selling beads
A large disappointed audience	28	A woman pursued by mature romance
A celestial choir singing	29	Two cobblers working at a table
A duck pond and its brood	30	Peacock parading on an ancient lawn

GEMINI		CANCER
A glass bottomed boat in still water	01	Furled and unfurled flag displayed from a vessel
Santa Claus filling stockings furtively	02	A man suspended over a vast level place
The garden of the Tuileries	03	A man all bundled up in fur leading a shaggy deer
Holly and mistletoe	04	A cat arguing with a mouse
A radical magazine	05	An automobile wrecked by a train
Drilling for oil	06	Game birds feathering their nests
An old fashioned well	07	Two fairies on a moonlit night
An industrial strike	08	Rabbits dressed in clothes and on parade
A quiver filled with arrows	09	A tiny nude miss reaching in the water for a fish
An aeroplane falling	10	A large diamond not completely cut
A new path of realism in experience	11	Clown making grimaces
A Topsy slave girl saucily asserting herself	12	Chinese woman nursing baby with message
A great musician at his piano	13	One hand slightly flexed with a very prominent thumb
Conversation by telepathy	14	Very old man facing vast dark space to the Northeast
Two Dutch children talking	15	Group of people who have overeaten and enjoyed it
A woman suffragist haranguing	16	Man before a square with a manuscript scroll before him
Head of health dissolved to head of mentality	17	The germ grows into knowledge and life
Two Chinese men talking Chinese	18	Hen scratching for her chicks
A large archaic volume	19	Priest performing marriage ceremony
A cafeteria	20	Gondoliers in a serenade
A labour demonstration	21	A prima donna singing
A barn dance	22	Woman awaiting a sailboat
Three fledglings in a nest high in a tree	23	Meeting of a literary society
Children skating on ice	24	Woman and two men on a bit of sunlit land facing south
A man trimming palms	25	Dark shadow or mantle thrown suddenly over the right shoulder
Winter frost in the woods	26	Contentment and happiness in luxury, people reading on davenports
A gypsy coming out of the forest	27	Storm in a canyon
A man declared bankrupt	28	A modern Pocahontas
The first mockingbird in spring	29	Muse weighing twins
Bathing beauties	30	Daughter of the American Revolution

LEO		VIRGO
A case of apoplexy	01	A man's head
An epidemic of mumps	02	Large white cross upraised
Woman having her hair bobbed	03	Two angels bringing protection
Man formally dressed and a deer with its horns folded	04	Black child playing with white children
Rock formations at the edge of a precipice	05	A man dreaming of fairies
Old fashioned woman and an up-to-date girl	06	A merry-go-round
The constellations in the sky	07	A harem
A Bolshevik propagandist	08	First dancing instruction
Glass blowers	09	A man making a futurist drawing
Early morning dew	10	Two heads looking out and beyond the shadows
Children on a swing in a huge oak tree	11	Boy moulded in mother's aspiration for him
An evening lawn party	12	A bride with her veil snatched away
Old sea captain rocking	13	A strong hand supplanting political hysteria
Human soul awaiting opportunity for expression	14	A family tree
A pageant	15	An ornamental handkerchief
Sunshine just after a storm	16	An orangutan
A non-vested church choir	17	A volcano in eruption
A teacher of chemistry	18	A Ouija board
A houseboat party	19	A swimming race
Zuni Sun worshippers	20	An automobile caravan
Chickens intoxicated	21	A girls' basketball team
A carrier pigeon	22	A royal coat of arms
A bareback rider	23	An animal trainer
An untidy, unkempt man	24	Mary and her white lamb
A large camel crossing the desert	25	A flag at half-mast
A rainbow	26	Boy with a censer
Daybreak	27	Grande dames at tea
Many little birds on the limb of a large tree	28	A bald-headed man
A mermaid	29	Man gaining secret knowledge from a paper he is reading
An unsealed letter	30	A false call unheard in attention to immediate service

LIBRA		SCORPIO
Butterfly made perfect by a dart through it	01	A sight-seeing bus
Light of the 6th race transmuted to the 7th	02	A broken bottle and spilled perfume
The dawn of a new day, everything changed	03	A house raising
A group around the campfire	04	Youth holding up a candle
Man teaching true inner knowledge	05	A massive rocky shore
Ideals of a man abundantly crystallized	06	A gold rush
Woman feeding chickens and protecting them from hawks	07	Deep-sea divers
A blazing fireplace in a deserted home	08	The Moon shining across a lake
Three old masters hanging in an art gallery	09	Dental work
Canoe approaches safety though dangerous waters	10	A fellowship supper
A professor peering over his glasses	11	A drowning man rescued
Miners emerging from a mine	12	An embassy ball
Children blowing soap bubbles	13	An inventor experimenting
A noon siesta	14	Telephone linemen at work
Circular paths	15	Children playing around five mounds of sand
A boat landing washed away	16	Girl's face breaking into a smile
A retired sea captain	17	Woman the father of her own child
Two men placed under arrest	18	Woods rich in autumn colouring
A gang of robbers in hiding	19	A parrot listening then talking
A Jewish rabbi	20	A woman drawing two dark curtains aside
A crowd on the beach	21	A soldier derelict in his duty
A child giving birds a drink at a fountain	22	Hunters starting out for ducks
A Chanticleer	23	A bunny metamorphosed into a fairy
Third wing on left side of butterfly	24	Crowds coming down mountain to listen to one man
Information in the symbol of an autumn leaf	25	An X-ray
An eagle and large white dove turning into one another	26	Indians making camp
An aeroplane hovering overhead	27	A military band on the march
Man in midst of brightening influences	28	King of the fairies approaching his domain
Humanity seeking to bridge the span of knowledge	29	Indian woman pleading to her chief for the lives of her children
Three mounds of knowledge on a philosopher's head	30	The Halloween jester

SAGITTARIUS		CAPRICORN
Grand Army of the Republic campfire	01	An Indian chief demanding recognition
The ocean covered with whitecaps	02	Two stained-glass windows, one damaged by bombardment
Two men playing chess	03	Human soul receptive to growth and understanding
A little child learning to walk	04	A party entering a large canoe
An old owl up in a tree	05	Indians rowing a canoe and dancing a war dance
A game of cricket	06	Dark archway and ten logs at the bottom
Cupid knocking on the door	07	A veiled prophet of power
Rocks and things forming therein	08	Birds in a house singing happily
A mother with her children on stairs	09	An angel carrying a harp
Gold-haired goddess of opportunity	10	An albatross feeding from the hand
Lamp of physical enlightenment at the left temple	11	Large group of pheasants
Flag that turns into an eagle that crows	12	A student of Nature lecturing
A widow's past brought to light	13	A fire worshipper
The Pyramids and the Sphinx	14	An ancient bas-relief carved in granite
Groundhog looking for its shadow	15	Many toys in children's ward of a hospital
Seagulls watching a ship	16	Boys and girls in gymnasium suits
An Easter sunrise service	17	A girl surreptitiously bathing in the nude
Tiny children in sunbonnets	18	The Union Jack
Pelicans moving their habitat	19	Child of about five with a huge shopping bag
Men cutting through ice	20	A hidden choir singing
A child and a dog with borrowed eyeglasses	21	A relay race
A Chinese laundry	22	A general accepting defeat gracefully
Immigrants entering	23	Two awards for bravery in war
A bluebird standing at the door of a house	24	A woman entering a convent
A chubby boy on a hobbyhorse	25	An oriental-rug dealer
A flag bearer	26	A water sprite
A sculptor	27	A mountain pilgrimage
Old bridge over a beautiful stream	28	A large aviary
Fat boy mowing the lawn	29	Woman reading tea leaves
The Pope	30	A secret business conference

AQUARIUS		PISCES
An old adobe mission	01	A public market
An unexpected thunderstorm	02	Squirrel hiding from hunters
A deserter from the navy	03	A petrified forest
A Hindu healer	04	Heavy traffic on a narrow isthmus
A council of ancestors	05	A church bazaar
Performer of a mystery play	06	Officers on dress parade
A child born of an eggshell	07	A cross lying on the rocks
Beautifully gowned wax figures	08	Girl blowing a bugle
A flag turned into an eagle	09	A jockey
A popularity that proves ephemeral	10	An aviator in the clouds
Man tête-à-tête with his inspiration	11	Men seeking illumination
People on stairs graduated upwards	12	An examination of initiates
A barometer	13	A sword in a museum
A train entering a tunnel	14	A lady in a fox fur
Two lovebirds sitting on a fence	15	An officer preparing to drill his men
Big-businessman at his desk	16	The flow of inspiration
A watchdog standing guard	17	An Easter promenade
A man unmasked	18	A gigantic tent
A forest fire quenched	19	A master instructing his pupil
A big white dove, a message bearer	20	A table set for an evening meal
A woman disappointed and disillusioned	21	Little white lamb, a child and a Chinese servant
A rug placed on the floor for children to play	22	Man bringing down new law from Sinai
A big bear sitting down and waving all its paws	23	Spiritist phenomena
Man turning his back on his passions and teaching from his experience	24	An inhabited island
Butterfly with the right wing more perfectly formed	25	The purging of the priesthood
A hydrometer	26	A new moon that divides its influences
An ancient pottery bowl filled with violets	27	A harvest moon
A tree felled and sawed	28	A fertile garden under the full moon
Butterfly emerging from a chrysalis	29	A prism
The field of Ardath in bloom	30	The Great Stone Face

ARIES 1 – 5

EMERGENCE

Enacting the desire to emerge out of unconsciousness we first become aware of ourselves as separate from Source. We see that it is this separation that creates duality, which is the essence of diversity, a requirement for dynamism; we become enthusiastic to express our individuality as a vision, the vision of our desire to be who we are. This is the universal story of how any aware being develops in consciousness - babe or deity alike.

With all creation stories, out of nothing something emerges, making real what previously existed only as potential; it has duality as its core principle, yet it is a single identity – in Astrology that is Aries. It thinks of itself as 'I', and strongly affirms self as the centre-point of reality. This affirmation triggers a response from the 'non-self' aspect of self, and there arises a polarity between non-self and self. In fact, what arises is the plurality of involvements with others, the collective non-self; this is the stuff of all life – relationship.

Whereas impetuous pursuit of self-interested pleasure is an entirely valid path to joy, our drives lead us towards self-realisation only through processes of maturity and refinement, involving others. Without this, no awareness can develop of the twin, polarised, aspects of consciousness we have within. Life is the mirror that shows us who and what we are, and as individuals our first challenge is to find a way to be with this, by showing who we are within the context of relationship – rather obviously with others who are not us.

The fact that they are not us has great consequence. Although the friction of this interplay increases as we struggle to become more unique, and we may find that socialising with others is both limiting and troublesome, it nevertheless is the backdrop of all existence and without it we can neither evolve nor express our unique qualities, because 'I' and 'other' are each aspects of the self and mutually supportive.

ARIES 1

A WOMAN RISES OUT OF THE WATER, A SEAL RISES AND EMBRACES HER

(REALISATION)

RUDHYAR: A WOMAN JUST RISEN FROM THE SEA; A SEAL IS EMBRACING HER

FIRST SEED OF INNOVATION

Emergence out of the realm of potentiality into the realm of reality

Everything that ever comes to pass has had its first beginnings in the realm of potentiality, the ghost of an idea not formed, neither expressed nor explicit yet, in seed form, containing the unconscious potential for mature realisation. The vast majority of seeds fail to realise their potential. In the beginning, to become an individual, we need to emerge from the sea of the collective unconsciousness – to 'leave the womb'. First the desire is simply to be, because it is still far from certain whether survival itself can be attained.

Knowledge of polarity awakens the power to create something out of nothing

The seal is a metaphor for the phallic principle, and the woman rising from the depths symbolises emergence from the pre-Existence '*waters of infinite potential*'. Out of that mystical nothingness something arises, drawn by a receptive potential. Separation is born, and it requires 'this' to be different from 'that'; the polarity of feminine and masculine is thus created. Also, Awareness is awakened, and expands.

Duality implies relationship between things. One is more rational and pushier, the other more emotional and responsive, and their relationship is sex in its essential form. The potentiality of space to give way has an awakening effect upon spirit to enter and express itself. Spirit naturally expands to enter wherever its desire-nature will be accommodated and be met by a willing response.

It is important to understand that the instinctual mind is an untrustworthy organ of deeper understanding. Yet when we are moved by the heart, such activation can be reckless, assertive, courageous and purposeful and will nonetheless realise only harmony and joy. From this we see that the heart must be engaged if our values are to be expressed sincerely rather than as empty, intellectual concepts.

What was dormant potential at the beginning is now vibrant – with interdependent emotion and purpose interacting together; these interactions generate vibration, life itself, in which things perpetually change. There are constant separations and re-formations, and the realisation dawns that, with initiative and responsiveness, anyone can take advantage of every moment.

Focusing this turbulent life force is the awesome task of a mighty will, operating through a clear mind with a precise vision, to produce a laser beam of intent. This power of will shapes uncommitted energy into the exact form that reflects its vision: what you 'see' is what you get, and seeing is active not passive.

If we lose concentration, the result is clouded and requires the corrective processes of refinement. This is feedback, which can teach humility and help develop awareness of our interpretations; also it binds us into considerate relationship, so that character can be smoothed out. If we get self-obsessed then we fail, because we forfeit the ability to recognise more obscure aspects of the infinite potential within any situation.

Another new beginning is always guaranteed, despite errors and pains. Restating original blessing is evidence of faith, innocence and purity. Hope is eternal, and faith is a birth-right.

ARIES 2

A COMEDIAN ENTERTAINING A GROUP

(RELEASE)

RUDHYAR: A COMEDIAN REVEALS HUMAN NATURE

REFLEXIVE SELF-CONSCIOUSNESS

Becoming able to see ourselves objectively from another's viewpoint

Objectivity arises when we come to see that we exist within an extended sphere of reality, and when we can laugh at how insignificant we actually are within that inestimable, cosmic world. We see how silly is our prideful self-love and, within the context of the greater picture, how irrelevant are our personal thoughts and feelings. It is a great leap forward on the path to realisation when we release self-importance.

Life is the mirror that shows us who and what we are

Intuitively, the feeling of having our own distinctive mind-set of beliefs, needs, dreams and attitudes is subjective proof of our uniqueness of identity. Philosophers suggest this is an illusion from a relationship with our environment – although most assuredly, it has meaning to us. Yet there is the tendency to repress much of our uniqueness out of shame, fear or other inhibitions that have arisen from external pressure.

To the soul, it actually matters very little what role we choose to play out but, probably because we seek self-reassurance, we repeatedly rehearse certain aspects of personality. These are naive attempts to experience life on our own terms. The comedian's task is to reveal other aspects, those which lurk beneath the gloss of what is socially acceptable, so that these denied parts can find release.

There is no limit to the variations of expression of our uniqueness, and no requirement to favour this over that – indeed it is important to experiment, and not judge one aspect of personality better than another – all aspects of self need to be promoted to discover the fullest range of potentialities. By laughing at humanity's funny ways, an entertainer softens resistance within us to acknowledge certain of our own unlovely qualities.

Although this process facilitates self-awareness, it does not guarantee it. Really we need to reach out and attempt to understand the significance and wisdom of whatever comes up and is being shown to us. We can laugh with the comedian in order to release trivial tensions, or we can delve deeper to reach for hidden understandings, and then the release can be experienced on a much deeper level.

We come across the same type of light-hearted revelation in so many different connections with people, and it is according to our preference whether we see them as idle diversions or find a glimpse of the truth of transcendence within each seemingly insignificant event that we encounter. The clowning can be considered as either a frivolous entertainment or profound and widespread spiritual teaching; the choice is ours.

Self-expression develops personal power; the power of personality evolves in the confident expression of the authentic self. Individuality arises out the polarity between affirmation and surrender of self as our worldview comes up against another's and, whether in anger, or laughing gently, we are made to pause.

The emergence of who we really are occurs as Life, which perpetually holds up a mirror to itself through us and to us. This is the essence-secret. Wrapped up in clouded mystery, with its own conflicts and distortions that have yet to be released, what we see is nothing more than a reflection of our own inner nature.

ARIES 3

A CAMEO PROFILE OF A MAN IN THE OUTLINE OF HIS COUNTRY

(EXPLOITATION)

RUDHYAR: THE CAMEO PROFILE OF A MAN, SUGGESTING THE SHAPE OF HIS COUNTRY

INVOLVEMENT IN THE WHOLE COSMIC DRAMA

The awesome power of Life itself, as we identify the most spiritual dimensions of being

The sense of being part of the Whole brings meaning and allows higher powers to act through us. It extends beyond our local community and embraces universal realities; we are part of it all and this knowledge gives us both security and power. We can even touch the level of Archetype and so awaken to that higher degree.

Individual and community are mutually supportive aspects of each other

As much as the individual serves society, society serves the individual – not only in terms of resources, but also in terms of their evolving definition. The man and the country are in mutual exploitation.

Although it may not appear so, in truth reality is personal. Each and every feeling, belief and opinion is an expression of this, and these all have ramifications in our life circumstances. If we are to reach our fullest potential as unique individuals then we must give full play to all of our potentialities. There is huge social pressure upon a person to obey the rules and do what is thought appropriate by conventional ethics and practice. Even so, some are capable of rejecting the bondage of reluctant or unthinking conformity, and find their own way to relate to the community that nurtures them.

Naturally, there are forces of empathy and familiarity that bind an individual to the collective reality that shows through culture and tradition. However – despite the benefits of accepting social norms – each of us will characterise our own take on this, as indeed we must do so if we are to be authentic in self-expression.

By doing so, we necessarily dedicate ourselves and our lives to the best interests of our community. We are as much part of the whole as anyone else and, without our doing what we feel is right, then there cannot be full engagement with the society of which we are an integral part. The community would be diminished.

This is in no way different from a personal imperative to dramatise our very personal wants and needs through the group, as a path of self-actualisation. How could we be ourselves if separated from the context of our traditions and culture? Where is the meaning in that? Even when we travel away, it is the place we travel away from, and is ever present in our history, memory and habits; this gives special meaning to our new experiences, and feeds the home community, which learns of them through us.

A real breadth of community involvement is therefore a sign of one who is truly self-oriented, having the wisdom and sensitivity to understand that each must serve the other if harmony is to emerge. Even more than that – it goes beyond just harmony to fulfilment.

The individual is thus silhouetted against the background of his country, each exploiting the other in the process of expressing a general principle in specific terms. When each relaxes into this truth, personal and communal interests are more profoundly in accord and more richly expressed.

ARIES 4

TWO LOVERS STROLLING

(ENJOYMENT)

RUDHYAR: TWO LOVERS STROLLING ON A SECLUDED WALK

POSITIVE AND NEGATIVE POLARITIES CREATING DYNAMISM

The unstable, energising polarisation of feminine and masculine energies

Duality is central to all existence, so to resonate with this cosmic reality and realise the full potential of our nature, we must examine and embrace the inner polarities of who we are. This is achieved in the interplay within some special one-to-one relationship – which necessarily requires a degree of isolated togetherness.

Unselfconscious pursuit of selfish pleasure is an entirely valid path to joy

In all that we do and feel, we experience the uniqueness of the world that we alone inhabit. If the feelings are not in alignment with our sense of rightness, then it is because something is not right. This is probably because we have moved too far away from the childlike sense that joy is our birth-right. Wish-fulfilment is our optimum life-strategy; being utterly relaxed is to be true to oneself and in fact loving – since the necessary and sufficient condition for living in an atmosphere of love is actually to relax fully into the natural state of being.

The image of two lovers taking a stroll in a quiet, beautiful setting, speaks of an experience of happiness without the burden of accountability. The moment is itself enough to justify its value as a valid and important experience, when no extraneous forces are allowed to press upon us any unwelcome responsibility. We need not even respond to society's requirements, knowing that such innocent joy is self-evidently good.

Such an act of faith is a guarantee that potentialities of character will blossom and thrive. It demonstrates the all-important self-confidence that brings a sparkle to material and spiritual realities. Confidence is powerful magic that generates further confidence and somehow leads to material success and spiritual freedom.

Taking this idea to its exaltation, we see that what is often called selfishness is in fact the spiritually valid principle of enlightened self-interest. No true meaning can be derived from behaviour that does not serve oneself. Nor does power have any purpose except continuously and persistently to promote our own reality in which our own interests are well served.

All our resources therefore are to be focused with complete commitment to serve the high purpose of enjoyment. Joy is sublime, so true enjoyment is that which moves us towards sublime self-realisation. When the least opportunity presents itself, then we affirm joy and enjoyment as a path of awakened self-liberation.

Responsibility must be in service of ourselves, or it simply lacks authenticity and is almost certainly an arising of hidden fears or guilt. Of course we have a measure of sensitivity to the needs of others, and yet that consideration is an elegance that takes second place to the primary duty of continual self-disclosure.

This wisdom is considered too permissive to be acceptable to mainstream society, which marginalises those who are strong in their personal power and have no willingness to conform to the fear-based morality systems of the majority. Self-indulgence, a distortion of this principle which often triggers criticism, is only really a danger for those who practice this philosophy without a minimal degree of spiritual awareness or conscience.

ARIES 5

TRIANGLE WITH WINGS

(ZEAL)

RUDHYAR: A TRIANGLE WITH WINGS

TO BECOME AWARE OF TRANSCENDENT POSSIBILITIES OF LIFE

Reaching up towards a new dimension of being

Having awareness of the essential mystery of life, that we are facets of Universal Consciousness, Unity experiencing Duality, we find a zealous appetite and innocent longing to know Unity again; so we develop a taste for a transcendent state of being. We see that our complete life journey will be directed so that eventually we can go back to where we came from and then reside in such an elevated state.

Through development and refinement, our impulses lead us towards self-realisation

Three aspects of individuality are encountered and refined in our interaction with situations and environments. These are our skills, loyalties and values; through these we make ourselves known to our selves. Each of us develops their own set of values and these become known through what we stand for and what we study. Skills unfold as we employ an inner quality of personal creativity; loyalties extend out from family to embrace friends and compatriots; values are what give life meaning, and point to our spiritual aspect. Together they ground our spirituality within the community context.

Just like a triangle, which is particularly well balanced, these three aspects firmly support us in our aspirations. Yet they are no less to be seen as wings that enable a zealous enthusiast to soar to heights of self-realisation.

In the journey of self-discovery, it is of key importance to appreciate the special worth of our impulses. As life throws up its adventures and challenges, we will know who we are through the purity of these original impulses and our essential nature will hold us in good stead if we trust them, whatever occurs. They are of course essentially shaped by values, loyalties and skills.

Life is necessarily a transformative sequence of events that examines the inner nature of a person through endless experiences. There are many aspects of the inner nature of our personality and desires, and they offer real evidence of the deepest enduring vision we hold of ourselves – that image of the future that tends to become reality. This image is inevitably based upon the three qualities, and the zeal we experience as we pursue our vision is a measure of our commitment to them.

The goal of life is to determine what finally we hold to be good and true. Do we assert light over darkness? And for us – what is light?

The basic self goes through unending tests of worth, the higher self unending examinations of conscience – and through these processes, refinement is assured. It is worth noting that these three motivating forces are inter-connected, and tend to develop together in a steady, evolutionary, progression – rather than shocking revolutionary shifts.

Without such a progressive approach we are left with nothing more than the dismissal of every ordinary experience as inconvenient, even pointless, except the extent to which it offers pleasure and promotes in us a blissful state of obliviousness to the truth of who we are and what we are doing.

ARIES 6 – 10

DIRECTION

Feeling the need for stability, we invest ourselves in a specific goal and, in pursuing it, we come to learn of two polarized aspects of our nature. Society provides a code of conduct to moderate how we respond to our inner sensitivities and urges and this cultural code underpins our ability to understand the wider reality. Our creative interpretation of how to understand it is what defines who we are, and this has both aspects, which are the push of the past - cultural explanations - and the pull of the future - personal vision.

The willingness to struggle within society opens us to be pushed and pulled about, a process which can be quite unsettling until we fix our motivating direction. Yet when we find a clear target for our intention, we can learn how to juggle realities, pick up skills, tricks and wisdom, and renew our trust in the deeply-felt exuberant, joyful life-force that enables us to banish all self-doubt. We need to find our path, and become so competent that we take initiatives to shape not only our own future but also the collective vision of society.

Self and non-self are always competing, even within. 'Polarity in dynamic equilibrium' could be one useful definition – or at least description – of life itself. When we get distracted and lose focus, the further we go away from centre, the greater is the force that flips us back to the opposite polarity. Thus, from a condition of self-proclaiming, we are flipped to more humility, and then back again towards confident self-expression, and so on indefinitely. We see this process very clearly with Aries, as it struggles to embrace self-confidence.

ARIES 6

A SQUARE BRIGHTLY LIGHTED ON ONE SIDE

(SET)

RUDHYAR: A SQUARE, WITH ONE OF ITS SIDES BRIGHTLY ILLUMINED

SETTING STABLE LIFE PRINCIPLES

The desire to establish oneself as a unique person

The regressive pulling-back – into non-individualisation within the vast womb of Nature – must be resisted, and the force of resistance is our urge to become different. Our sense of differentiation first awakens at the level of family and tribe (culture operates on the principle of exclusion: and one blood, one land, one people) and so we take on conventional behaviours, beliefs and practices. However, our yearning to be expressive as an individual focuses as a drive to achieve our own special goals and have our own special attitudes to life.

Without the gift of knowledge, then experience is meaningless

This image employs traditional symbolism: a square indicates materiality, and the light is spirituality. We are all challenged to set ourselves upon an enlightened path as we struggle with physicality.

Life gives an unending flow of encounters to assimilate into consciousness, which is possible only by giving meaning to these experiences; a path must have meaning, or events are disconnected and lack depth of purpose. Spiritual philosophy teaches that all is symbolic. Without knowledge, experience is meaningless, yet without experience, knowledge is two-dimensional. Can we see that knowledge is the symbol of experience, and experience the symbol of knowledge? Each is the meaning of the other, and neither has meaning alone.

How we choose to create meaning out of experience is entirely dependent upon our system of values and preferences. There is interplay between what we value, how we understand things, and what we accumulate as knowledge. This subtle connection informs our every choice and our every response.

The events that reach deep into the core of our being do so because they can awaken hidden aspects within. Establishing our unique authentic identity is a prodigious task. We are taken into states of confusion, timidity and indecision – all of which are the antithesis of spirit, whose essential nature is spontaneous, courageous and certain – then our thoughts waver, and even the best of us lose sight of what we are becoming.

A set life-direction, based on passionately-held principles and adherence to standards, is of greater worth than one that lacks purpose or clarity. It is more useful to oneself and the community; it brings substance and distinction, and in time it develops gravitas and wisdom.

It takes strength to assert oneself against the many forces that constantly push and pull from all sides; we must not surrender to the frustrations that arise, or the integrity of true self will be lost to distortion. Yet we still have to accommodate others' positions and visions in order to maintain relevance and win support.

A set attitude to life will create two types of experiences – supportive and challenging – and both will be clearer and stronger according to the clarity and strength of our decided purpose to give a set form to our beliefs. We must learn to welcome each experience wholeheartedly, because both are eventually needed if we are to optimise our required outcomes, and integrate knowledge of the meaning of our lives.

ARIES 7

MAN EXPRESSING HIMSELF IN TWO REALMS AT ONCE

(PROFICIENCY)

RUDHYAR: A MAN SUCCEEDS IN EXPRESSING HIMSELF SIMULTANEOUSLY IN TWO REALMS

LIVING BOTH SIDES OF EACH SITUATION

Waking up to life's inherent polarities and possibilities

In contrast to our single-pointedness and willingness to fit in is our ability and capacity to hold alive and vibrant two polarities of life, each of which brings joy, and taken together explain the complexity of our human experience and our relationship to such dualities as spiritual/material, self/community and magical/religious.

Mastering the focus of attention brings competence in all of the many realms of existence

The nature of reality is not made clear to us except insofar as we are able to create for ourselves a well-defined identity. This clarity of identity progresses in direct proportion to the degree of proficiency we develop as we learn how to control events. It is wrong to assume passively that there exists, in secret, a complete and detailed version of self and that our life's purpose is to uncover it. Identity is created out of a never-ending succession of choices; it does not exist at all except when making these choices. They can be choices of action or perception – doing or being – and they arise out of what we do with the focus of our attention.

Our mastery over external situations can never be total, yet we get better results when we learn how to divide our attention. We need to know how to divide our focus of attention enough to determine between this and that – as a matter of choosing what has little urgent consequence and what is actually important now.

According to conscience, preference or expediency, a more developed person chooses where to put their attention. Typically, they focus away from what is no longer pressing and towards what now deserves the mind's full concentration.

In this way, we come to realise the principles by which to discriminate what we value. We better define who we are by making informed decisions that enact these higher values. When we live according to our principles, rather than the expediency of what is easy or profitable in the short term, then we develop depth and richness of character and evident gravitas. In turn this attracts a more colourful and meaningful series of life events.

Because of the confidence that comes from living out of values, we can express great versatility of action, always moving towards the most likely activity by which to approach an appropriate, currently important, goal. Proficiency comes simply from living the path we choose, and acting out our own will, not another's.

Yet the easily-distracted mind can so easily be directed wastefully, and then it achieves no more than an impotent, unthinking scattering of resources.

There are many realms of existence. We live simultaneously in physical, emotional and spiritual realms, this is much more a true representation of the nature of reality, and each person has their own particular version of what is happening. If we master the mind's focus, then we are able to participate compellingly, and respond fully, to see the world in own our way with our own distinctive take on things.

ARIES 8

LARGE HAT WITH STREAMERS FLYING, FACING EAST

(EXCITATION)

RUDHYAR: A LARGE WOMAN'S HAT WITH STREAMERS BLOWN BY AN EAST WIND

BALANCING PASSIONATE ENTHUSIASM WITH JUDICIOUS CAUTION

Spiritual guidance and protection

Being open and sensitive to higher energies requires a wisdom that the immature person has not developed. Protection is required to limit psychic forces until sufficient development of consciousness has occurred; guidance is advised so that the source and implications of the 'wisdom of the East' may be assimilated fully.

Half-hearted warriors die, as do reckless ones

A primal assertive force presides within each of us, equivalent to the excitation indicated by an erect phallus, and stirred into expression by the imminence of new experience, into which we feel to inject an initiative. Those of us who have watched the Sun rise know how all-pervasive and compellingly pure this feeling can be. We feel powerful, even in the face of the absolute life-giver. Yet this high wisdom can only be safely expressed and realised by the adept; others need some help and protection from the burn out of too great an exposure to spiritual vitality. If we saw God's face unveiled we would be immediately destroyed by its power.

Naturally society has to assert the collective will; that is its essential role. Yet the spiritually awakened individual has awakened the power of spirit, and this power is not social at all, it is self-glorifying. It is exuberant and demonstrative, it is naive and self-proclaiming and it is receptive to the fiery powers whose only apt symbol is the Sun. Naively, we show our joyful exuberance by showing off our fine feathers, tying streamers to a party hat which catches the wind, so we are noticed and seen to be filled with life force.

In this mood we enter relationships with those around us and are ready to engage with any and all of the possible variations and novelties that humanity throws up.

We come to realise that we can utilise all life experiences, all kinds of interactions and involvements, to the benefit of all concerned, simply by having sensitivity and responding assertively to bring forward the potential in all situations.

Every scenario is new; each moment has its own dawn, its own birthing of potential – and the one who sees it first can claim it, and integrate much of the great force of its life energy into their growing expression of self.

Feeling God-like, the assertive ego knows itself to be capable of creation and has absolutely no false modesty about his rights and duties to create whatever its perfect imagination suggests. Life itself is a force that triggers assertiveness and initiative. It does not serve to posture or pretend, because a false interest or involvement leads to unhelpful kickback. The required commitment is an absolute, unconditional assertiveness – half-hearted warriors die!

By this process a person can find an underlying trend, and actualise it as their life purpose. Then they are able to offer complete and unconditional cooperation in every moment, co-creating with awareness through a continual act of dynamic balancing.

ARIES 9

A CRYSTAL GAZER

(ACUTENESS)

RUDHYAR: A CRYSTAL GAZER

CONCENTRATION OF PERIPHERAL MENTAL AWARENESS

Awakening the non-grasping, all-seeing, subtle aspect of mind

Being able to see the whole picture, the mature psychic can interpret scenes and scenarios in the holistic context. This perspective is not given to one lost in narcissistic self-love and obsessed with self-projection.

Perception of what is shapes what is to be

A person who gazes into a crystal ball is attempting to access an aspect of the mind that needs to be stimulated by non-rational techniques. Often called right-brain intelligence, this half of the mind's understanding is found through soft surrender to intuition and developed by committed meditation.

Through the marrying of this with rational thought, we are able to perceive with much greater acuteness the linkage between what is imagined and what comes to pass. We actually have the capacity to bring to mind an entire universe, to grasp its operating principles, and to learn of the tools by which to manipulate it.

Rather surprisingly, we find it to be entirely subjective. The bigger, cosmic picture, though indeed accessible, is only accessible through personal experience, with all the uniqueness, prejudice and ambiguity that that entails. We see that our perception of who we are, with all its convoluted oddities, is none other than a perfectly authentic, graphic representation of our slant on outer reality.

We come truly to understand that what we imagine is the map of what we will come to experience. Fiery imagination and watery intuition married together offer unique and mysterious glimpses of what is to come. From nothing more than these glimpses, we are willing to modify the set of our journey and bend towards the dark temptation of the unknown. There is a hint of the hero's quest beginning to emerge.

Hero is not pioneer nor leader. To realise his potential, he needs to resolve the paradox of how one can be simultaneously thesis and antithesis of society. The hero is thrown up from within the community at a time of crisis in order to rework the principles of the group consciousness into a new form. The crisis has arisen because the old ways are no longer being interpreted meaningfully for the evolved times. Danger is at hand and the hero is ready and willing to act upon the omens that speak of permanent radical change. Interestingly, this so often occurs in stories when the hero consults the oracle, typically a crystal-gazing woman.

The world and the individual are thus in a cosmic interactive partnership, each in time reflecting the other in every mood and every situation. So this allows a rough indication of what is to come, since what we feel now must somehow be reflected in the future. With care, this facility can be used to shape our attitudes and strategies in organising outcomes to suit our personal convenience.

We are aware that, taken beyond a helpful level, such ability inclines us towards idle curiosity. Why seek information about the future if we have not the willingness to shape it? Gazing upon it will shape it, that is cosmic law, so are we clear enough, energetic enough, to deal with the effects and consequences of that?

ARIES 10

A MAN TEACHING NEW FORMS FOR OLD SYMBOLS

(INTERPRETATION)

RUDHYAR: A TEACHER GIVES NEW SYMBOLIC FORMS TO TRADITIONAL IMAGES

DEVELOPMENT OF OBJECTIVITY AND CIRCUMSPECTION

It shows mature wisdom to see our emotional dramas as symbolic; they are life-lessons

As we mature, we need to cast off previous models of reality and reinterpret past experiences, seeing them more clearly as metaphors having deeper meaning than we saw when we were previously absorbed in self-establishment. We are better able and more prepared now to contemplate our feelings as symbolic indicators rather than to get lost in them.

Knowledge evolves as old ideals are embodied into new experiences

What is so often imagined to be a creative slant on reality can be nothing more than a witless distortion of values – just a twisted perspective of events. Although truth is a subjective and unique personal experience, our interpretation surely needs to be kept within the boundaries of reasonableness. Some renderings are simply silly and entirely unworkable as useful models of life.

What is needed is a readjustment of understanding that requires a careful assimilation of our personal encounters. Checking out our experiences against the viewpoints of others, including predecessors, provides a degree of objectivity, and helps us to find a more genuine picture of what is actually valid.

This brings abstract concepts into the realm of personal significance, so that the collective, usually inherited, ideals of society take on meaning for us as individuals, with our own system of values, which set of values is an important part of how our reality is experienced, since we tend to see things the way we want to see them.

These symbols can be of any type from arcane rune stones to works of art, in designs or in poetry and myth. To study them in depth requires a degree of embodiment from which arises new insights – as a direct result of updating theoretical old symbolism into the current truth of contemporary encounter. These realisations are actual reorientations on emotional, mental and physical levels – you can feel them change you.

The wisdom of the race is constantly subject to a renewal process that depends upon the interplay between abstract ideals of collective reality and personal experience. What is condensed into historical symbolism speaks to what is real and must not die. We can only grasp the meaning of our lives by the interpretation of symbols; they must be currently apt or our sense of what is true becomes outdated and restrictive.

This renewal is by process of trial and error, and keeps fresh the heritage that cooperatively we are part of. It works because it validates hypothetical knowledge against the incomparable worth of practical experience.

Yet eventually, bit by bit, the eternal progression of refinement leaves its mark, and a divine truth emerges. We see that a singular principle is dramatizing itself in multiple forms – one in the many – and is valid for both the individual and the community. Ultimately, we learn that all symbols point towards one thing, one source, one wisdom – which is the meaning and purpose of all life for everyone and everything.

ARIES 11 – 15

ATTAINMENT

We try to grasp reality through feelings but later theorise and explain, for which discipline of mind is needed; we also feel a higher order reality that speaks of freedom. Immature rebelliousness against imposed discipline fails and teaches us that we have to find the balance that reconciles both parts of our nature, only then will we radiate the light expressing fulfilled desire. Our desire to differentiate seemed to be a very basic, simple urge, and yet now we find how very challenging it is to remember our original state of grace as we grapple with duality. Perhaps we can hold it for a few moments, but then duality's dynamism pulls us in again.

Lesser attainments – fame, fortune and position – typically rob us of true freedom, and the more enlightened Aries, rather than serve them, will use them as development tools. The urge towards freedom is so wrapped up at the core of our essential existence that it is irrepressible; this is because it is spirit itself acting through us. Yet within the context of a social setting, however we seek freely to discover and express our thoughts, feelings and aspirations, we find that we are just acting out an appropriate part of the community's highest ideals. Equally, no matter how we serve others, we end up serving ourselves.

Bringing this into awareness, and acting out freely all of the consequences, is a liberation most feared by society as a whole, yet most respected within an individual. It cannot be safely expressed except by one with a high degree of spiritual attainment. Evidence of this is found in how spontaneous we can be in refining and revealing our skills and wisdom. This includes choosing our focus of life clearly and finding a way to balance freedom against involvement.

ARIES 11

THE PRESIDENT OF A COUNTRY

(IDEALISATION)

RUDHYAR: THE RULER OF A NATION

POWER OF SELF-DISCIPLINE

Society's insistent desire for order stimulates the individual to develop self-control

Much like forces of law and order in society controlling the lower elements, we must use a mature, disciplined ego to tame the beast within ourselves and bring to heel the instinctual and emotional nature.

Leaders sacrifice themselves to an ideal and suffer penalties for their imperfections

The ultimate expression of self-assurance arises only when we focus entirely upon our chosen primary value, for example honour, courage or wisdom, subordinating all other characteristics to that one purpose.

To become a country's highest representative, one has to be shaped to an extreme degree and sacrifice other aspects of self; therefore it is vital that the primary value is carefully acknowledged and is of crucial worth to the individual. To become a central and principal influence, it is not enough to be able to find a new way to spin the established wisdom and ways of your society; the deepening of personal qualities is also required.

Any major life role is selected so that it can allow the fullest, broadest demonstration of whichever value we champion, so that it is fashioned and strengthened to the highest degree possible. Recognition by others is a major shaping force that moulds our qualities and characteristics to fit the exact requirements of the position.

The ego is in high relief yet it serves society's needs for leadership rather than pride as the community is lifted up by one whose own spirit is in close alignment with the group's. The intolerant public critically challenge any behaviour that betrays community values, indicating clearly if the leader is not conforming to their ideal.

What follows is a study in idealisation. An ideal is not a real human quality but a philosophical concept. It is held up as an aspiration that guides people to awaken the best version attainable within them. The more emotional undercurrents of the zeitgeist incline towards expression through qualities rather than simply beliefs. Ideals not ideas. These are more enduring and speak to the hidden parts of society's unconscious memories, and have far more impact upon the collective psyche. Rousing the people to support a new initiative is better done with tone and rhetoric rather than logical, patient explanation.

However well intended, efforts to become more assertive and realise the ideal will usually lead to vain pretence and destructive outcomes. There will always be disappointment – the ideal is after all only a dream. The leader so often gets caught up in a situation based on make-believe; it is entirely unsustainable.

We must be willing to accept the disappointments and the resultant projections of others – of reproach and criticism – in the knowledge that it is the ideal itself that is being furthered, not our self-love. In fact, rather strangely, the impact of a leader, or indeed spiritual teacher, can be measured by the extent to which their supporters end up blaming them for their own denied shortcomings. A highly aware leader will be willing and able consciously to adopt the role of scapegoat in service to the community. Christ did.

ARIES 12

A FLOCK OF WILD GEESE

(INSOUCIANCE)

RUDHYAR: A TRIANGULARLY SHAPED FLIGHT OF WILD GEESE

COSMIC ORDER

The existence and supremacy of a spiritual, higher order in life is a matter of faith

There exists a higher, cosmic order, which stands above, beneath and within everything that human society tries to control. It is this: that each of us is free. And when all of us express this soul-freedom spontaneously and in good faith, then all is right in the heavens.

Involvements lack meaning unless they lead eventually towards spiritual liberation

No matter what life circumstances arise, no matter what challenges and temptations there are to face, no matter how noble the aspirations we embody, there is one quality that can never be beaten down – we all want freedom. Insouciance means being carefree or unconcerned and light-hearted.

This is the true essential core of personality and is irresistible in every single aspect of life experience. This absolute indomitable freedom-urge speaks to us of our immortality and our spiritual heritage through the innocent imperative of independence.

It is this that allows us to have the expectation that our ideals will all be fulfilled, and cosmic obligations towards us met. We trust in this because in the end that is what freedom means – that we get what we want.

What we know sets us free; yet knowledge, to be raised to the level of wisdom, requires experience – and therefore involvement. If we want involvement then we must invest our freedom. We may forget the freedom-feeling when we concentrate upon the inherent challenges, yet our ability to rise above things is ever-present. An aspect of humanity is its gift to be spirit-like, free from burdens. No matter how important we become or how burdensome our responsibilities may be, an inner voice cries *'freedom!'*

When geese are seen to rise above it all, the picture of insouciance, they are as free as birds – yet they are slavishly obeying their undeviating characteristic migration. We too are absolutely free to do whatever it is that we must do – a beautiful paradox.

As a personal characteristic, this quality could become a very selfish attitude that actually does very little to add real value to self. We need to guard against an irresponsible, wasteful lack of focus that amounts to nothing more than reckless negligence.

It's a thin line between this and the high spiritually valid pursuit of one's unique, creative destiny, detached from inappropriate burdens and fruitless anxiety. There is, at the core of our eternal being, an absolute sense of our cosmic birth-right to be free to choose every step of our path throughout eternity, whether embodied or as spirit. This sense is the fundament of all existence and is more powerful and pervasive than all else. However much we get cajoled by society – oppressed and brainwashed, emotionally blackmailed and simply deceived – still we know deep down that freedom is the absolute eternal truth of life.

ARIES 13

AN UNSUCCESSFUL BOMB EXPLOSION

(IMPETUOUSNESS)

RUDHYAR: AN UNEXPLODED BOMB REVEALS AN UNSUCCESSFUL SOCIAL PROTEST

IMMATURE FRUSTRATION

Trying to change things hurriedly and without due process will always fail

The urge we all feel to cast off the yoke of social pressure and claim our freedom is potentially a very subtle and profound spiritual state of consciousness. Yet when it is expressed in a distorted way as petulant rebelliousness, both spiritual authority and social approval is missing. It must fail, it should fail and it does fail.

When energy is allowed to flow freely, the outcome is ultimately always good

We all have destructive urges at times and these can sometimes seem to be as evil as an anarchist's bomb. Yet they are not evil. These urges are rendered dark and unwholesome because they generate frustration when they are denied and judged inherently wrong. Yet even the destructive forces of forest fires, tempests and volcanos have an invigorating – life-giving – dimension when seen from a wider time perspective. These forces are entirely necessary to rebalance things.

A person can find how to achieve a dynamic balance between two opposing motivations. One is to serve society at a high level of responsibility, the other to be absolutely free to follow their own destiny. The inner intuitive knowledge of how best to act in support of one of these – and not the other – is often entirely unreasoned; it is no more than an impetuousness feeling.

The heart remains open when we allow the flow of innocent impetuousness to sponsor our words and actions. This has special worth because the strong and open heart absorbs and nullifies the destructive acts of humanity, making unsuccessful any attempts to do harm.

When energy flows freely, the outcome is ultimately always good. In the battle of dark against light, light is always the winner in the end; goodness eventually overcomes all else. It may be that this is less than self-evident, yet it is self-evident that we are always better off to affirm optimism, even to make it our moral code.

The truth is that Nature is dangerous, even human nature. The civilising processes are relatively recent innovations and are far from fully embodied in the species. So, however liberating and creative these spontaneous impulses may be, they cause distress in others who feel the need to be more controlled and 'civilised'. Often enough, danger arises when the fears of such people are not sufficiently respected, then they rise to the surface, embodied as unconscious, fearful behaviour.

When pure impetuousness is distorted into petulance and vanity, nothing useful is created. Futile expenditure of energy and wasting of resources is its outcome. The feeling itself is valid, yet any feeling can easily become distorted when it is embodied into self-serving behaviour; we always have to guard against these distortions.

Even so, forgiveness also has its place in the deeper mind of society, and most often these naive outbursts are not severely punished even if they result in apparently anti-social behaviour. If we trust in this, then life becomes a lot more relaxed.

ARIES 14

A SERPENT COILING NEAR A MAN AND A WOMAN

(REVELATION)

RUDHYAR: A SERPENT COILING NEAR A MAN AND A WOMAN

MAKING RELATIONSHIP SACRED

Tuning into to rhythms of natural energy instead of being enslaved by passion and need

We get drawn into relationship – by sexual desire and emotional need – to learn how to internalise polarity. Rebellious immaturity is only be dealt with when we master polarity inwardly rather than by seeking another person to make up for our lack of wisdom and emotional poise. Facing relationship in sacredness is the key.

Awareness of the highest aspects of life depends on embracing the lowest

Our sexuality arouses revelation of the most profound wisdom – that naive impetuosity is balanced in time by the wisdom of responsible self-discipline. Acquiring this balance shows that we understand our place within cosmic reality. With significant self-control, we are safe to explore lower aspects of our nature without fear. Baser impulses, largely rejected by society, are important contributors to wellbeing and must not be denied.

Nature is dangerous and human nature is no exception, especially sexuality. Yet to grasp who and what we are, then then we are required to feel deeply into the hidden areas and accept our darker side. We have urges and they must not be denied or repressed, or else we will soon find ourselves overwhelmed by these baser instincts, and lose the truth of our balanced condition. Our appetites lead us into the darker region of human experience, and towards the knowledge of the more essential, less civilised, aspects of our true selves. Without this exploration, the deeper secrets kept taboo by society are never assimilated as wisdom.

Half angel, half animal, we are forced to develop the power of dynamic balance that is afforded by an active, sensitive, expressive heart. Sex is an activity that allows, in fact revels in, the interplay of two people enjoying their animal nature in sacred play. Were animal to dominate, then it would become hollow; were angel to take over then it would lack full-bloodedness. When the heart is open, both sacredness and lustiness can be found in exaltation and the true revelation of wisdom is found that the heart's deepest purpose is to balance.

Without delving into unconscious urges, we could never rise up to the heights of conscious experience. Without accepting the baser aspects of ourselves, we cannot appreciate the highest, sacred aspects of life.

Original Sin is refuted here, and biblical knowledge of good and evil is now understood as distortion of a profound esoteric principle. The 'Fall' of Adam and Eve is in fact a courageous adventure into the acceptance of our baser nature so that the higher self may become free to emerge and express the greater glory of God.

The mystery of three is revealed as man, woman and sex, or as rational, emotional and creative. This comes about when duality is neither obeyed nor feared – it simply is what it is. Neither good nor bad can ever exist alone, and both are essential aspects of Creation and creativity.

Revelation is not a part of religion, it is part of mysticism. A student of the mysteries will have to slough off the constraints of good and bad – the moral code by which society controls the masses – in order to awaken the depths and heights of knowledge, well beyond the limits of duality.

ARIES 15

AN INDIAN WEAVING A BLANKET

(DILIGENCE)

RUDHYAR: AN INDIAN WEAVING A CEREMONIAL BLANKET

COSMIC CONSCIOUSNESS

Living more and more as a realised being

Finding an inner balance of polarities, we are raised into cosmic consciousness. At first only momentary, we revisit this higher state repeatedly, holding it for longer periods. Mystics metaphorically refer to this as being robed in the universe, weaving a seamless robe, or spiritual vesture. Becoming a unique being of light, this is the fulfilment of our desire to differentiate and express ourselves entirely creatively.

Sanctifying ordinary things shows great personal wisdom and leads to harmony

The simple business of life is able to give a sense of great personal satisfaction; just meeting our own personal needs and taking care of very basic matters is as meaningful as any activity. A highly developed person makes everything look both easy and important, demonstrating high principles by doing mundane tasks properly. The Indian's diligence is not only shown in anticipating the survival need to guard against cold nights, but also creating beauty, continuing a sacred tradition, and developing personal skills and qualities.

When we place this idea into a cultural context, we see how a range of arts and talents are to be learned in order to live in keeping with our community. The development of such abilities not only enhances the culture but also stabilises the individual ego.

It is this ego-centring, as much as the learning of skills, which enables us to experience deeper self-awareness. Through these two processes, self-service and community service, the ability to bring about desired objectives is fixed. Being ourselves is then entirely enough to achieve our highest goals and, at the same time, enjoy life to the full.

This is the difference between achieving success and being successful. The best grounding of these most subtle understandings takes place when we learn simply to be who we are, and how to cope with life. There are enough little day-to-day challenges to keep us focused on the matter in hand, and these demands upon our skills and artfulness are important lessons – in fact examinations.

We are therefore advised to be diligent – to get on top of things in the ordinary daily life circumstances that we have, so that all necessary skills become embodied as personality traits. Whenever we do anything to the best of our ability, as an act of sacredness, then life becomes a simple demonstration of personal excellence.

Indeed, there is no better demonstration of the genius of our highest being than persistently to engage fully and quietly in doing what needs to be done, and doing it excellently well.

Otherwise what? No merit is to be found in the acceptance of the daily round as dull, or simply in service of our need for comfort and security. In that case, external results may show shallow signs of success in material terms, yet on the inner planes, little is gained.

ARIES 16 – 20

REFLECTION

Desire is impotent unless it marries with the potency inherent within life's natural forces. These are accessed only when we find our own dynamic rhythm of doing and being - as portrayed by the yin yang symbol. Only when we take action to detach from the stresses and strains of worldly engagement can we gain the magical perspective of imagination to see what is real, and how to handle life's issues compassionately.

It is important to understand that the awareness we give to our spiritual, social and physical environments defines us, so the focus of our attention must be very prudently directed. We can learn a lot about how to optimise this important life task by reflection. Reflecting on how Nature works, and how natural processes generate the life-giving energy that creates abundance and fortune, and how well we are responding to that. Two equal and opposing forces that co-exist, pure impulse and conditioned response, must be held in balance – so we learn how to be utterly true to ourselves, and act as though we make a difference, even knowing that on a cosmic scale really we don't. This leads us to question our identity and true worth, and we are stimulated to a greater refinement of being. A sense of resolution unfolds – we feel reconciliation with the inappropriate differences between outer purposes and inner feelings, which causes the friction and stress in our lives.

One lesson to learn is the value of retreat. The hustle-bustle of daily life is good to shape and define us, and yet it is very helpful to take time out to assimilate and take possession of what has been experienced. The reward for this exercise in self-reflection is a broadening of outlook, a sense of expansion of personal freedom, and a shift in the level of our self-assurance. If the mind is occasionally nurtured with silent contemplation, it develops its capacity to overview experience and utilise imagination as a magical process. It is only through reflection that we come to understand that helping others is what brings us happiness.

ARIES 16

BROWNIES DANCING IN THE SETTING SUN

(INVIGORATION)

RUDHYAR: NATURE SPIRITS ARE SEEN AT WORK IN THE LIGHT OF SUNSET

REMEMBERING THE NON-INDIVIDUAL, DEEPER ASPECTS OF SELF

Tuning in to Nature spirits

When the body is weakened by illness, fasting or sensory deprivation, this allows our subtle body of light to resonate with Nature spirits. By doing so we become stronger and gain potential, which is important for both recuperation and taking further initiatives to extend our influence. Do we not all feel invigorated by natural elements – the wind, rain, Sun and stars?

Becoming like a little child, living in a holistic, non-rational, intuitive manner

It is perfectly meaningful to see life as a free dance, trusting Nature with unfettered confidence. Part of us wants to go a bit crazy, is recklessly risk-taking, spontaneous, life-affirming, and throws caution to the wind.

This attitude is rewarded for its courage and sense of adventure with real tangible abundance, and is supported when we trust that the relationship between an individual and Nature itself is essentially friendly. What could show this more than spirit and Nature together dancing down the Sun like an innocent girl child?

What is going on, in and through the individual, is the operation of universal law reworking reality by sorting and resorting, sifting and shifting, in an ever-dynamic review-and-reveal process. As a direct result of their enthusiastic willingness to participate in this continuous dynamism, at whatever expenditure of effort, the individual attracts great good fortune – whose fruits are felt as simple, reliable, constant abundance.

It is a rare individual that can grasp the eternal paradox of life. One who can, will enjoy this great abundance, and often has access to a delightful, sparkling nature. Enthusiasm is a divine quality, quite literally the flowing of God through one's whole being, and it has the supreme ability to create success on all levels. With this, all is possible. It engenders confidence, optimism, charisma and other positive qualities that defeat life's heaviness. So what is this paradox? It is – that we must act as though we make a difference, even knowing that we don't.

Sufis call this 'struggle and surrender', and teach that happiness depends upon finding a dynamic balance between them. As taught in Taoism, all action adds to imbalance – and yet the absence of imbalance is the end of dynamism and vitality, the end of life. Therefore, since nothing really matters on a cosmic level, it makes perfect sense to do crazy things, trusting in our luck, and dance around the difficulties with a smile.

The test of awareness for this degree has to do with finding the correct balance between complacency and struggle. Some could suffer delusions of self-sufficiency instead of appropriate self-serving activity.

Everything returns to Source to be purified; this is an eternal cosmic law, which maintains the integrity of everything in its non-stop waves of eternal change. A lifetime of vigorous action pulls the individual away from unification for a speck of cosmic time. It is folly to believe that such activity matters much, and yet also foolish to think it does not. To act anyway, knowing it is reckless and pointless is evidence of a very inspired wisdom.

ARIES 17

TWO PRIM SPINSTERS

(DIVORCEMENT)

RUDHYAR: TWO DIGNIFIED SPINSTERS SITTING IN SILENCE

TURNING WITHIN TO EXPERIENCE OUR TRUE SELVES

Poise and serenity develop when we spend time in peaceful solitude

When we lack potency in the outer world it is helpful to turn within and deepen our inner world of peaceful grace. This is also an aspect of potency but strengthens a more passive aspect of self – Being rather than Doing. Engagement with others is often draining, even dangerously so; at times retreat is entirely appropriate.

We must be utterly true to ourselves

It can be totally fitting to divorce ourselves from everyday living with all its judgements. The image of a couple of old ladies, having lived alone together for decades, is often considered farcical, sad and bizarre – yet such eccentricity speaks of a very private sustainment of reality, a valid personal creation of the world. The insular condition of retreat shuns the triviality of superficial relationships, which so often waste our precious energy.

Society's morality, laws and practices can be too burdensome for certain people. At what cost this support? If the price we pay for these securities and comforts is the loss of uniqueness, then the soul suffers. Better to insulate ourselves from such a corrosive influence than to live without access to the soul's spiritual wisdom. We are who we are and, within reasonable limits, let society come to terms with that!

Great pleasure can be found by isolating ourselves far from the madding crowd – we feel joy when we shield ourselves from distractions. We can turn our backs upon worthless, spiritually-unprofitable relationships, and reject their lesser rewards. Mindless pretence of virtue and distinction is poor substitute for the true unfolding of our inner qualities. Being caught up in such vanities precludes the possibility of real accomplishment in life.

A moment's wry reflection upon the quality of ordinary day-to-day conversations gives us to understand just how shallow and lacking in wisdom is the general population in its work-a-day mode of being. Yet, a lot of people find such intercourse to be the exaltation of their impoverished life experience.

There is of course absolutely nothing life-denying about casual commerce – but each of us has our own unique and creative spin and, rather than conforming, we must bring this to bear in every situation. As we do so we enrich both the lives of others and our distinctive sense of self.

People concern themselves with distorted perceptions of our business – we have to avoid any inclination to please them; above all else, we must be true to ourselves. To find out what we stand for involves idealisation. We raise our ideals and feel them to have a spiritual quality then we find and define our unique specialisation and allow nothing into the private domain of our personal experience that would compromise our integrity.

Living according to our ideals, we become able to reject pressures to conform and implicit judgements against those who do not. Such an approach usually brings a solitude that is not easily endured by most people. Except for the very advanced, this becomes loneliness, and so is no longer life-enhancing. It's good to find a like-minded companion so that some measure of society is maintained as the spinsters have done.

ARIES 18

AN EMPTY HAMMOCK

(RUMINATION)

RUDHYAR: AN EMPTY HAMMOCK STRETCHED BETWEEN TWO TREES

RESPECTING THE RHYTHM OF LIFE

All living things vibrate – struggle and surrender are life's clear message

All life is rhythmic, and our personal long-term well-being and effectiveness depends upon our ability to find and practise whatever rhythm works for us. It is as inappropriate to be constantly active as it is to be constantly inactive or passive. Failure to understand this leads to a poor condition of life.

Two equal and opposing forces exist: pure impulse and conditioned response

Contemplation is the first step towards inspiration; time spent ruminating can actually be very productive. An active person needs to set aside time just for being, or lose a sense of how they feel. Down-time is required for a healthy psyche – so it is better to plan for it and make it serve, rather than disrupt outer reality.

Life throws up an almost constant barrage of difficulties and most people have absolutely no idea why; others take time to lie on their hammocks and ruminate on matters. Our difficulties are not thrown at us by a mischievous or cruel set of gods to spoil our joy, nor do they need to be an unsolvable puzzle. We can come to terms and gain sufficient insight to cope and improve but only if we give some thought to what is going on, otherwise we are fated to re-live the same issues repeatedly on a constant cyclical treadmill.

With poise, we find peace and good conscience, so we find greater awareness of the conflicting polarities within us. In fact, this is the process whereby we form relationship, as we strive to find a good fit between the inner and outer inclinations in life. The urge to balance is the motivation towards conscious relationship.

By reaching a state of inner reconciliation, we become wiser and more capable of organising adjustments in our situations. Through reflection, we find that disharmony arising can actually better be reconciled within if we remember the integrity of our being. To bring a sense of balance requires the heart to become involved, which typically is easier when we slow down since if the heart is not still external lack of harmony arises.

We have impulses; to always deny them is to deny life – and yet to always allow them is to deny the civilising processes of self-control. Here is the knife-edge of self-definition, the crux-point of identity. This is the frontier of self. It is not enough to refine our personal vision; we must also consider group consciousness. '*What is the collective vision of this time and place – and how does my unique self-expression give greater glory to that?*'

Personal freedom is an absolute imperative, as strong an urge as any other; it cannot be denied – it will not be thwarted. And yet the self requires a society, or it is nothing. So the advanced thinker envisions a society wherein each individual's vision is aligned with, and supportive of, society's collective vision.

Self-adequacy is maximised through an absolute dismissal of any compulsion of society's conditioning. We may not understand the purpose of conditioning, nor indeed why others conform while we reject – but the intuitive mind doesn't need such explanations. Life is always subject to our perception, re-interpretation and influence. We cannot dodge it – the best we can do is optimise it according to our own sense of rightness.

ARIES 19

THE MAGIC CARPET

(PANORAMA)

RUDHYAR: THE MAGIC CARPET OF ORIENTAL IMAGERY

RISING ABOVE ORDINARY PERCEPTION

Relaxing the mind supports a creative, positive and visionary way of seeing things

A way of life refusing hectic involvement in social competition and wasteful overproduction allows for development of unattached, transcendent understanding. When in repose, the creative mind can better survey our present situation, and then stuck routine can be transformed into a new, holistic perception.

Mind has an infinite capacity to use imagination as a magical process

Religious teachings emphasise social involvement whereas esoteric wisdom in mysticism is arrived at in a detached condition. The mystic scorns ordinary living with all its burdens. Social influences make intense demands upon the mind to focus on worldly matters, in pursuit of position and wealth whatever the cost to the spirit. This is madness, and of course is supportive of depression, anxiety, superficiality and Godlessness.

Daily spiritual practice will remedy this condition, allowing us to rise above the denseness of the earth so that the mind can enjoy a relaxed state and recuperate from its ordeal. There is a misconception that meditation takes up time and diminishes our effectiveness in dealing with life. The reverse is true, because we spend less time making mistakes and have a general access to a higher degree of wisdom and insight. Then all of our involvements become meaningful, and our vision of the future becomes rich and expansive.

Curiosity is a key quality that distinguishes our species – it unlocks greater human potential. The expansion of potential, the expansion of vision and the expansion of consciousness are all correlated. To grow, we need first to see further. As we look, so we find. Those who look out towards distant horizons will envision a broader future for themselves and for humanity, seeing how great is the gift of an unlimited array of possibility.

With right mind, we can glance around at a vast panorama of potential as if from a magic carpet, above it all. Overview enables us to decide how and where to become involved in human affairs, and the degree of our involvement reflects the extent of our willingness to let go of the panoramic viewpoint. This greater vision, gained through detachment, can be put to advantage, as we learn to use imagination to expand our destiny.

Life offers this for each of us, limited only by our imagination. Even when we focus down, and temporarily lose the perspective of detachment, a part of us remains a little aloof so that we can always pull back for reflection.

Soul freedom is never fully lost, though there is a danger that it can be all but forgotten. If we lose sight of our spiritual self, life is shallow; a hollow, pretend life lived by a caricature, surviving a scant diet of vicarious or imagined joy. It is to be avoided at all costs. Such a life is a distortion of the spiritual principle of detachment.

With an unattached state, we can still celebrate all potentialities, many variations on a theme, a kaleidoscope of experiences – without a need to become over-involved. The trick is to maintain a subtle, fluid, state of mind wherein we are able, moment by moment, to be both passionately committed and completely detached simultaneously, being lost in neither material nor spiritual realms.

ARIES 20

A YOUNG GIRL FEEDING BIRDS IN WINTER

(HOSPITALITY)

RUDHYAR: YOUNG GIRL FEEDING BIRDS IN WINTER

SEEING LIFE AS A CONSTANT OPPORTUNITY TO EXPERIENCE LOVE

Life's very harshness is what enables us to learn of love's unfathomable depth

Nature is harsh – people and animals suffer and starve, and they die. Yet without harshness compassion could not exist; there would be no place for it. There is no higher purpose than to live life as a constant expression of compassionate love. This is neither fanciful nor sentimental love; it is feeding the hungry stranger.

In the act of giving, spiritual nourishment is felt as joy

Hospitality is the mystery of the mutuality of joy created by giving, where the subtle and the substantial are married together elegantly, with a delicate awareness of the importance of each of these two aspects of life.

Our love for the beauty of Nature, whose power is actually often cruel and life-threatening, is hard to balance with our quite normal fears of danger. Yet for some people, there is an inexplicable force of innocence that makes them quite comfortable with the challenge of finding the balance, and usually enables them to do so.

Usually the power and beauty of Nature stimulates wonder within us; this is more easily accessible to the young-minded, receptive, innocent person. The qualities of youth, and of the feminine, are more perceptive to the experience of Nature, and seem to have a more profound attunement to its mystery. The girl does not rail against the cold, she does not wallow in useless feelings about hungry birds; she feeds them.

It seems, on a surface level, that it is largely the birds that are receiving the benefits from this act of generosity; yet there is more to see. A truly significant benefit is accrued to the giver – an extraordinary power of self-assurance is enhanced by such an act. As we give to the needy, we the givers experience nourishment.

If the gift is of bread alone, with a zealous do-good intention, then much is forfeited, especially if the deeper hidden intention is to win approval. This more masculine act serves quite a different purpose and has a barren quality, rather like foreign aid, whose purposes are political rather than caring. The physical item passed – bread or money – is surely better seen merely as the symbolic objectification of the actual, deeper gift of love.

Our spirituality shows in the sensitivity we bring to acts of charity. The love implied by the gift has power to sustain life and hope. Trusting in Nature, in life itself, each day we see blessings all around us. As seasons change, so we flow; passion and stillness exist, so each is in our way of being; we see how abundance is sustained by the interactive flow, so we open up to receive and become conduit for hospitality and generosity.

Because of its innocence and vulnerability, a baby is not without power – it strongly influences behaviours and outcomes. This is evidence of humanity's essential goodness – we are gentle with the vulnerable, and kind to the needy, when we have no reason to be. By making themselves entirely at the mercy of others, like babies the innocent attract kindness and thereby contribute receptively to the spirit of generosity. We need to surrender to life in order to open ourselves up to participate in such generosity, either as a receiver or a giver, and trust that our own needs will be met, and that we have more than enough to share with those in need.

ARIES 21 – 25

SELF-CONFIDENCE

Within the culture of group interaction, we can see the yang force encouraged by glorification of powerful, aggressive individuals, while the yin shows how the synergy of cooperation creates abundance. Anyone who masters both of these is inwardly fulfilled and becomes open to the revelation of higher spiritual energies and correspondingly a new dimension of potentials.

To defeat the dying of light, then we must have faith in life and in ourselves, together with an ardent outlook that welcomes new challenges. Such optimism is to be recognised as a force – in fact the outstanding force of life; it is equivalent to self-confidence. With it, whenever necessary, we can decisively take up a confronting stance, and come to terms with and everything in full mindfulness of how we may serve, and also be served, by whatever comes along. When we are fighting to survive – against an enemy or the dark vacuum suction of entropy – we may need to hide some secrets to protect our vulnerabilities from the force of social enquiry. We also need to develop a thick skin for the same reason so, if sensitivity to others is at a very low ebb, then that's just the way it has to be. Yet self-confidence, fully expressed, leads to satisfaction, and satisfaction leads to further confidence, as we expand our horizons of expectation to greater levels of possibility.

ARIES 21

PUGILIST ENTERING THE RING

(EXERTION)

RUDHYAR: A PUGILIST ENTERS THE RING

POWER BOTH OVERWHELMING AND OVERWHELMED

Two sides of aggression

The will-to-power is glorified as the primordial struggle for survival of the fittest, and eagerness for fame and fortune. Yet the ring with two fighters can also be seen as the Tai Chi symbol and the interplay between Yang and Yin. Each of the two types of energy wins in turn. Victory is always temporary in a dualistic world.

Conflict provides the grit we need to become stronger

This boxer has conviction in their powers of accomplishment, and vigorously exhibits concentrated self-determination. We seek the triumph of victory, and success supports further confidence. Eventually we let go of the need to achieve goals – having learned where we are strong and where weak. Self-knowledge and self-confidence are closely related; a person who knows their strengths and their weaknesses stands strong.

It is understood that such confidence is enhanced by the supportive attention of others, in their role as an audience, enjoyably observing such a complete and compelling revelation of full exertion.

It is foolish to rebel blindly against those who would try to limit our manifestation of ability and force. Such defiant behaviour will inevitably lead to a squandering of resources on things of little or no true value.

However, much is to be gained by a courageous, energetic, up-and-at-it approach to dealing with the business of life, revealed best in combat. We can speak metaphorically of the fighter – but really the battle is first internal. It shows in the world at large as conflict – and it supports our yearning to grow strong. We seek it.

Raw experience is the grit that promotes such self-realisation. There is never any shying away from an ardent mobilisation of capacities. Pushing forward against resistance is necessary if we are to maximise capability, so antagonists have a cooperative influence. Competition and conflict are not to be seen as negative forces. We can't improve without coming up against others who test us in our strength, commitment, ability and courage, and this does more than measure us; it develops us. Without them, we cannot move to fulfilment of potential.

It is not always useful to pull punches; we need to punch through to a new level of self. We are unlikely to allow empathy to diminish the chances of achieving success, sensitivity to the needs of others is not stressed at all, their feelings are not our concern; they must look to their own strengths to deal with their experiences.

Without conflict we cannot awaken the resources with which we deal with conflict – courage, concentration, resistance, a willingness to take risks and cope with friction, uncertainty and antagonism. We put aside all other concerns and focus on one thing – wholeheartedly dedicating ourselves to ourselves. We only improve our game by competing with a stronger opponent. To push further and develop potentialities, we are willing to risk the fruits of previous attainment without caution or fear of loss. Nothing ventured, nothing gained.

ARIES 22

GATE TO THE GARDEN OF DESIRE

(PROSPECT)

RUDHYAR: THE GATE TO THE GARDEN OF ALL FULFILLED DESIRES

OPTIMISM AS A LIFE PATH

Abundance arising as a result of trust

Contrasting the fighter's harsh, lonely path a softer way is open to those who share rather than compete. The benefits of synergy are then highly significant and the promise of great abundance is fulfilled. A further benefit is achieved – the development of an attitude of optimism and expectation of success.

Vitality is made known by its appetite for new experiences

I am. I exist. I am alive. Beingness itself is the first and most mysterious truth. It is self-evident and incontrovertible – nothing can deny existence – and it is evidenced by desire. As desire opens up more prospects of self-disclosure, it rewards itself with a deepening of faith – and the affirmation of optimism.

Curiosity and adventure are longings that pull us all into undiscovered regions of potential. In this way all new impulses are given form; they can be understood as the twigs and branches that give greater and richer diversity to shape the metaphorical tree of life. Free will allows us to choose hardship or the fruits of our heart's desire. When those strong in faith strike out to fulfil desire, then the universe aligns and delivers.

Character is shaped as we seek reassurance that our aims have value and are appreciated – that they serve to beautify life. The process is continuous, a reflection of the universal pattern of twigs and branches – thus do ideals become real, embodied in us and expressed as new facets of an evolving personality.

Pursuit of self-fulfilment is directed with courageous enthusiasm towards new frontiers. Rivers are there to ford, mountains to climb. The overcoming of obstacles is welcomed as the only route to development. A pioneer is involved with stepping bravely where no-one has been before, gaining the advantages of being first.

Arrival is not attractive as a final destination; it is simply a resting place. Fulfilment of visions would only offer evidence of the poverty of imagination. We are at the gate of the secret garden, the celebration of all desire. The prospect is abundance; a bounty that is beyond the reach of appetite for a normal person.

Yet there is work to do! Fruit does not jump off the branch into the mouth, and fantasies are ten-a-penny without effort to realise them. Time spent a-dreaming has to be measured against time spent a-doing. Imaginings are powerful, creative urges that bind subtle feelings into substantial images. For dreams to come true these images have to become thought and deeds – and that requires effort.

Most people are caught up in the struggle for survival, yet others always enjoy the choicest fruits, the deepest relationships, the most exciting adventures. How do they do it? They celebrate life itself, with joyful, optimistic expectation that the superabundance of goodness promised in the Garden of Eden is theirs for the asking. A sense of the eternal comes through the heart as naive optimism, the conceit of youth, which is as blessed as it is charmed. This arrogance sees an unlimited future of desires fulfilled, only then to be replaced by new desire newly fulfilled – in a never ending tropical garden constantly and simultaneously in fruit, in flower, and in bud.

ARIES 23

A WOMAN IN PASTEL COLOURS CARRYING A HEAVY AND VALUABLE BUT VEILED LOAD

(RETICENCE)

RUDHYAR: A PREGNANT WOMAN IN LIGHT SUMMER DRESS

THE RICH POTENTIAL OF EVERY MOMENT AND SITUATION

Assertiveness and desire together give birth to creative new possibilities

When clear assertive purpose applies to a field of potential, something else is brought into being. Existence is not sterile; it is brimming with a polarized life-force that cannot fail to create new life. Man, woman, child is a pattern that repeats universally – as artist, materials, artwork for example, or ideal, limitation, inventiveness.

Vitality does not find its exaltation in petty things

A modest woman, with her own burdens, is somewhat disinclined to open up. We consider here the basic importance of anchoring ourselves inwardly. In order to attend to our own issues we must somehow cut ourselves off and establish a wall against intrusion. This can be done elegantly and without giving offence by veiling ourselves, and being cautious about opening up to new things.

Each of us can reach up to a state of personal brilliance. For this to occur, the various elements need to be in correct relationship, and we have to give them our fullest attention, investing our sense of identity within them rather than externals. We must not engage in trivia if we are to remain true; since actually we each have the capacity for genius but becoming bogged down in pettifogging niceties will certainly erode this capacity.

It is best to avoid situations where there is pressure to conform to low standards of interaction. We must to defend ourselves against the insidious vampirism of those people who drag us down to their level of mediocrity. If we lack true involvement then external events are mostly distractions; any experience of enduring value is established only to the extent that we take personal responsibility for its outcome.

It is easier to say no than goodbye, so it is usually better to resist new involvement than abruptly curtail what has already begun. We can afford to understate our aims while we establish the worth of engagement – in fact, our very vitality and personal integrity will often depend upon such an approach. We do not want to disappoint another; it could lead to resentment and perhaps attack. Such an attitude – where we concern ourselves deeply with what is our business, and shy away from what is not – leads towards an unimpeachable integrity of character.

It also promotes a great fullness of life, not only for us, but also as a significant and proper contribution to the community. This is because we successfully engage with what we are doing, with not much wastage of effort.

We may need honestly to identify any disinclination to engage with the community at large on fair terms – and to check that we are not taking more than we are giving. Eventually this would bring distress.

It becomes clear that most interactions are inconsequential and that the superficial variances between people are unimportant. If we are not careful, we can easily waste too much time and energy dealing with things of no ultimate worth. A certain reticence to become involved with such trivial matters may therefore be particularly helpful whenever we have heavy loads to carry.

ARIES 24

AN OPEN WINDOW AND A NET CURTAIN BLOWING INTO A CORNUCOPIA

(MUNIFICENCE)

RUDHYAR: BLOWN INWARD, CURTAINS OF AN OPEN WINDOW TAKE THE SHAPE OF A CORNUCOPIA

THE SHAPING POWER OF HIGHER FORCES

Allowing spiritual energies to inspire and impress us

When we grasp the essential spiritual principle of Threeness we open up to further inspired input of a spiritual dimension. We first master the secret of the yang/yin/Tao triplicity - push, pushback, adjust - and then allow the higher aspects of beingness to impact upon our inspiration to expand our claim of abundance.

Personal attainment is evidenced by the spiritual state of abundance

Symbolically, the open window is inviting; the prevailing breeze is unseen, yet points towards the horn of plenty. From this it is understood that, for those ready to respond, subtle guidance must not be ignored if we are to 'seize the day'. In Sufism, the mystery of the Earth plane is seen to be abundance. The perception of oneself as poor is false – either a false interpretation or a false strategy of mind.

A Sufi sheikh instructs a student who is travelling to a strange town – *"Seek out the luckiest person you can find".* The student is perplexed. *"What is called luck is one of the outward indicators of a spiritually advanced person",* explains the teacher. In a real sense, luck is a spiritual principle. When we have learned well what to do and how to be, then we attract good fortune. It has a lot to do with sharing. The wise have learned to embody the spiritual principle of open-handedness – as an example of the Golden Rule. This rule teaches us to be to others the way we want them to be towards us. What we give out, we get back – so being generous attracts generosity. The unconscious aspect of mind interprets our generosity as evidence that we are well-off, and therefore leads us to expect to receive good fortune. This expectation is self-validating.

Therefore personal attainment is evidenced by abundance. This need not be financial or material – it is a state of being, felt as the absence of want. A strong, clear ego brings confidence because we are being true to ourselves. Such confidence brings good luck because abundance is the natural condition of an aligned being. When there is an alignment with all parts of our abundant being, then we have attained our natural authentic state.

Therefore, this degree shows an irrepressible gift for capturing the richer rewards of life, and sharing them generously with others.

Human and cosmic truths are interactive – each reflecting the other – and here we see that the cosmic truth of abundance is matched by richness in the material world.

Also, we remember to be both grateful and graceful, and avoid the smugness of those who vainly dispense favours as though their bounty is an aspect of self-love, rather than cosmic love.

Uninhibited enthusiasm is a spiritual practice, which gives evidence to the wisdom of mutual, generous sharing. Giving and receiving with an open hand, we become more and more certain that abundance grows if it flows.

ARIES 25

A DOUBLE PROMISE

(SENSIBILITY)

RUDHYAR: THE POSSIBILITY FOR MAN TO GAIN EXPERIENCE AT TWO LEVELS OF BEING

EXPECTATION OF GOODNESS

It is crucial to envision what we hope to experience

We can only ever attract life situations in keeping with our expectations in accordance with what we deeply believe. Therefore, optimism has to become a constant disciplined practice, the exaltation of which is faith. Living in faith is a revelation, the disclosure of vast and wonderful possibilities. We learn to live differently - head in the clouds, feet on the earth - what Sufis describe as being in the world but not of the world.

We get what we want, or we will come to want what we get

Whenever we fully access the information made available to us through our senses, and feel into the implications, then we experience greater sensibility. As a direct result of this we become more resourceful, and since few people are able to do this, one who does gains an edge.

This ability is a spiritual gift and misusing it would be a compromise of personal integrity – chicanery is always better avoided. If we get stopped in our tracks then we can surely find alternative options, and some of these will have equal – or even greater – value to us than what we thought we wanted. By noticing this unlikely fact, we grow in trust that everything always turns out well in the end.

The double promise is that we get what we want, or we will come to want what we get. There is skill and wisdom in learning when to move from the first to the second.

Looking beneath the surface of this life-affirming idea, we may see how it applies in the process of optimising cooperative endeavours. Cooperation often asks us to moderate or put aside our own track of activity. With the full confidence that the unexpected always eventually leads us true, we have no difficulty bending a little.

We learn to turn negative ideas and feelings around, confident that better things are coming. Everything can be seen as valid – to test us and to train us – to assist our process of learning how to measure our own needs against those of others, and seek equality rather than advantage. That we can gain advantage is a false concept. What suits our long-term wellbeing best is to live in balance; advantage disturbs that balance, and might easily lead to a distorted perception of self as having greater importance than another.

When we are happy with the way we are, we no longer externalise our conflicts; we deal inwardly with the ever-present dualities. Of course it is still helpful to engage with others whose life-view differs radically from our own, and yet we seek cooperation rather than competition. Everything needs to find its balance, and this is more explicitly enacted in cooperative endeavour than elsewhere. So we can learn how to find it within ourselves from finding this balance with others.

The optimist sees set-backs as clear symbols of a better situation approaching, and begins confidently looking out for this newly-expected good fortune. Of course, this anticipation of success speeds up the process and quickly attracts hard evidence of its realisation.

ARIES 26 – 30

PROFICIENCY

We must anticipate the need for new skills and attitudes, bringing more care and attention to everything we do, to deepen our faith in order to overcome setbacks, also to remember to see things from the other's point of view as we act to assert our own. In this way we learn to hear more clearly, and respond to more consciously, the subtle, universal melody of life - and yet at the same time competently hold together our normal, challenging, life situations.

Exceptional abilities and wealth can be attracted when, through a refined contextualised self-confidence, we equip ourselves with the intellectual and emotional tools required for a successful life. Then just being ourselves is enough to call upon the world to align with our choices, and subsequently we can cope well with all events and bring them to a creative expression of who we are. Such psychological maturity bestows great presence, a commanding atmosphere, and willingness to become the absolute author of our own destiny. We look no more for popularity and social affirmation; such rewards are seen as transient and lacking in any depth of worth. The power and proficiency we have acquired are applied towards dramatizing visionary potentials in ourselves and others, because somehow the eternal celestial notes are heard to be sounding out life's essential harmonies. There can be found a greater sense of sacredness in every aspect of life. This shows in that we do everything as well as we can, constantly reworking plans to improve outcomes, and being free from any need for approval or permission, having surrendered to an inner sense of what is meaningful to us.

ARIES 26

A MAN POSSESSED OF MORE GIFTS THAN HE CAN HOLD

(EQUIPMENT)

RUDHYAR: A MAN POSSESSED OF MORE GIFTS THAN HE CAN HOLD

WARNING AGAINST OVERSTRETCHING

Danger of becoming obsessed by range of life's possibilities

It is very unsettling to find ourselves awakened to life as a constant spiritual experience. Rules and restrictions also operate on this level and we have to relearn what we may or may not attempt. We are advised to move forward calmly with a high degree of caution as we encounter examinations and trials of a higher order.

Our life-path is the answer to the question: 'at what am I competent?'

We do not look for nails to bang just because we own a hammer. A toolbox includes equipment that, once mastered, is only used when necessary. Too many psychological skills and gifts can become confusing, because priorities are more difficult to establish; it is helpful to discriminate clearly between what has importance for our life-journey and what does not. Obsessional interest in things of no consequence needs to be eliminated.

The journey towards self-discovery is the central motivation of a life well-spent and it is very well supported by resolute independence. The skills and knowledge to support this drive are found in social contact. Energy spent making connections is well rewarded, giving rise to improved personal capacity for social involvement.

The driven individual becomes of real value to their fellows, having an extraordinary spread of sincere interests and an inclination to try all and everything. Yet the risk of exaggerated self-confidence is strong and there is a tendency to take on too much, leading to frustration, restlessness and self-betrayal.

There is, however, the capacity for effort to support an impressive level of ambitious self-projection, which can lead to real self-fulfilment. Life is meant to be somewhat challenging, otherwise our abilities could not be developed. As we face up to these challenges, we find more and more inner resources, which perhaps were only ever experienced as dimly-felt potentialities, if indeed we even experienced them at all.

Let's not get too attached to the abilities themselves, and especially not the fruits of our skills. These are lesser treasures that can blind us to the real gold, and diffuse our focus. The real gold is soul-development, which comes by developing the qualities that give rise to ability, rather than ability itself. Virtues such as sensitivity, compassion and truth will bubble up in all relationships whether or not we become counsellors.

However distracting corporeal life is, it is all illusion and only of temporary and personal relevance. What is eternal registers on the level of soul; in fact we can meaningfully describe the soul as that part of an individual's psyche that registers and stores information of permanent – that is eternal – consequence. What makes us competent is the ability to choose what matters to us – from this, all flows. This is because we are, by nature, existentially competent; we are born to be capable. However, the real mystery that we need to penetrate is this: 'at what am I competent?'

This question is our life-path. But ironically, perhaps the best answer to this question from the soul's perspective is 'it actually doesn't matter very much at all; whatever you do, do it well'.

ARIES 27

LOST OPPORTUNITY REGAINED IN THE IMAGINATION

(REFORMULATION)

RUDHYAR: THROUGH IMAGINATION A LOST OPPORTUNITY IS REGAINED

UNDETERRED FAITH IN PURSUIT OF IDEALS

Re-evaluation of what success is

Self-development takes place on a trial and error basis; it is process not outcome that matters and without set-backs we cannot perfect faith, the true prize. When we fail to achieve our intended purpose then we must adjust our orientation of intent, considering again what success really looks like on the deepest levels.

We constantly re-create our lives and characteristics out of our imagination

Life is a game of snakes-and-ladders, and we must find a way to avoid certain of the snakes, and also limit the reach of their downward thrust. To deal with setbacks, optimise gains and minimise losses, we must put some safeguards in place. This is done by setting a foundation table, below which we simply can never fall. This baseline is probably best expressed as qualities – truth, justice, non-violence and self-control for example.

At core, we are immortal beings, whose essential purpose is to recreate inner characteristics as our outer identity. This is like a river, ever-changing yet seemingly constant; it reformulates itself in every moment. Of key importance is the ability to take effective command of ourselves and find ways to be more than a pawn buffeted around by external superficial situations.

Life usually isn't smooth for very long. Every step we take is met by resistance, and big steps meet big resistance. The youthful fool runs helter-skelter into any mountainous challenge, showing their skills and celebrating their exuberance of energy. Not everyone learns from their mistakes, some seem to re-enact their faults perpetually as though caught in a treadmill. The more astute person will establish a base-camp before moving forward, and firmly claim and establish new territory before setting off to higher goals.

Using creative imagination to find new opportunities, the wise become authors of their own destiny and they work to well-defined principles and plans. This wisdom is the fruit harvested from earlier enthusiasm. Principles are firm constraints that enable difficult questions to be resolved without too much soul-searching. The soul has already searched, and decided in principle, so we simply need to fall in with its guidelines.

Plans have the effect of shaping the mind clearly so it projects a better, more efficient intention upon the field of possibility. The formula of our life-plan is always a work-in-progress, and we need continually to reformulate strategies if we are to do better than we did. This is the key to mastery – never-ending adaptation and improvement as we are directed to greater accomplishments in response to our particular desire-nature.

Frequent disappointments, frustrations and false starts simply lead to defeatism and self-pity as a retreat from reality. Sadly, it has to be observed, this describes most people in today's world. This indulgence of self-pity is thoroughly demoralizing, and is entirely avoided in a fully mature adult.

Without making mistakes, we make nothing. Not every bit of the energy invested in consolidation is always well-spent. But over time it usually is; anyway, it's insurance, so part of its value is to offer peace of mind.

ARIES 28

A LARGE DISAPPOINTED AUDIENCE

(DISJUNCTION)

RUDHYAR: LARGE AUDIENCE CONFRONTS PERFORMER WHO DISAPPOINTED EXPECTATIONS

KEEPING OUR WORD

Great hopes and excited expectations cannot be sustained

We need to take other people into account when we make our claims and promises, so that we do not later disappoint. If we want to perfect both will and sensitivity then we need to everything we can to fulfil our promises – this strongly impacts upon what possibilities of development and achievement will unfold for us.

The hardest lesson we eventually have to learn is detachment

Self-identification rests not in shallow demonstrations of acceptance from others, but securely in our own sense of how we creatively deal with life's challenges and opportunities. The superficial rewards that are offered in life are transient. Only that which is basic, stable and true will endure.

There is little value in pursuing popularity by triggering or responding to fleeting moods of the masses. The audience's disappointment speaks of their own failed expectations and has little to do with the real worth of the celebrity they target. Yet it is also better to avoid unnecessary upset through disappointing others.

To be free of the seductive pull of popularity, we must separate, to create disjunction, from that which does not offer lasting value. It is meaningful for a child to copy parents, and for students to follow teachers, yet this process is introductory. The enlightened adult needs no parenting. Attempts, by priests, officials, family and friends, to influence the opinion and behaviour of a mature adult have to be carefully examined. As distinct individuals, we must become indifferent to persuasive rhetoric to remain free, authentic and spontaneous.

In Buddhism this concept is taught as the enlightened principle of detachment. Finding our true spiritual path, we learn to cater to nothing external except to demonstrate preferences. How people respond emotionally to us should not be the major factor when we choose what to do. There are more important criteria by which to live. This has to do with expressing our own take on life, and the deepest, soul-level motivations that we feel.

Others' feelings can pull us into their world of resentment, prejudice, depression and untruth. This needs to be firmly refuted. We must set boundaries against their cynicism, and disregard how our controversial approach is received; then we are protecting ourselves from its demoralising influence.

We do need to be involved with others, since we learn from them and we have both a theatre stage for our self-proclamation and a source of grit to stimulate our growth. However, it is helpful to become self-reflective. Since we cannot depend upon applause, eventually our immature attention-needs would probably lead to disappointment and disillusionment because applause is by no means certain in life.

This reflection supports the development of our own unique set of values. Otherwise, unconsciously we will probably surrender our true self into the defeats and frustrations of others, and the risk is strong of becoming identified with failure and losing our sacred optimism. Then let those who witness our activities be the ones to be disappointed if they so choose; it is not for us to be too concerned with the emotional processes of others.

ARIES 29

A CELESTIAL CHOIR SINGING

(VENERATION)

RUDHYAR: THE MUSIC OF THE SPHERES

TUNING IN TO THE SOUND OF THE UNIVERSE

All life is like a melody and we need to learn how to hear it

We become more in harmony with life by becoming sensitive to the Universal Chord. We all have our part to play and each essential part adds a little more grace to beautify the whole melody of life, which resonates throughout universes everywhere and always. As we act we shape it a little and as we listen we shape it too.

Having faith in the meaning of life, we articulate it through devotion

It is said of the Cherubim that throughout eternity their sole purpose and activity is to praise God through music and song. Within us, we experience the cosmic overtones of this vibration as spirituality – or at least the foundation of spirituality – and this is made known by our attempts to project spiritual curiosity into daily life.

Then we can transform the fear-based distortions, such as self-deception, flattery and delusion, into more useful expressions such as self-examination, appreciation and imagination. Whatever we bring to the table adds to the feast whenever we tune in to what Sufis call the 'music of the spheres.' All personal powers and skills can be harnessed legitimately for purposes of self-projection without fear or embarrassment.

Combining two things, power and beauty, we create the world we choose to inhabit. Each of us is an immortal being, an instrument for enduring visions, and our aspirations hallow the world – our hopes are prayers.

Veneration is a subtle form of articulating eternal realities. Bringing them into the world requires both the power to act in the world and the mystical knowledge of how to infuse ourselves with beauty. To be competent in the world of phenomena, we must become competent in the unseen realms. The realm of the psyche that is approached through spiritual practice is largely unknown. Materialists therefore distain it, and often deny its existence willy-nilly, without examining the super-abundant evidence that points to this realm.

Something unexpected occurs when we put aside conditioning and give praise. There is indeed great power in the voice to actualise our thoughts – hence the importance of cleansing ourselves of cynical conversations. When we speak the name of God, with a tone of beauty and awe, then we invoke divine presence. We therefore invite into our bodies the associated qualities and awareness – of divinity, beauty and wonder.

Only a minority of people are willing to raise their unrestrained voices in praise, yet there is a dimensional difference between feeling devotional and expressing that feeling. Something magical happens when we train the voice to express the highest aspirations we can reach – whether or not that is seen as spiritual. Negativity is healed so that we begin to express optimism more readily than cynicism; the result of this healing is seen in our lives as improved good fortune, and a better attitude to difficult situations.

Prayer has become habitual, empty or avoided by so many, yet the sincere seeker comes to understand the esoteric significance of this practice – that devotion beautifies the personality, that prayer is fundamentally human and self-empowering, and that we are psychologically healthier when we engage fully with it.

ARIES 30

A DUCK POND AND ITS BROOD

(RELIABILITY)

RUDHYAR: A DUCK POND AND ITS BROOD

FEET ON THE GROUND

Worldly competence is a spiritual quality

In Zen the monk is taught that chopping wood and carrying water are suitable activities to demonstrate and practise the inherent spirituality of life. We need to pay the rent and feed the kids despite our higher state of cosmic awareness. Spiritual insights that cannot be brought into daily life are not wisdom teachings at all.

When we trust in the cosmic order, then everything falls into place

The image is of a very ordinary event: animals finding an environment in which to raise young. Yet a person is born to greater things. Of course we need to become a reliable agency of natural processes like nesting, breeding and feeding, but any tendency to accept such a life as meaningful is evidence of complacency and is wastage of human potential. Humans are said to be part angel, part animal. The animal nature teaches us about food and sex, fight and flight, whereas the angelic connects us to the Absolute.

The vast majority of people struggle to find even the same level of competence as the animals as they seek home, job, partner and kids, (and we do need to understand that these pursuits are all animal functions). Anyone who has managed this is already quite rare. Nonetheless competence in a human goes further, and has to do with finding a workable balance that acknowledges both parts of our make-up, angel and animal.

We learn how to establish our own world according to our unique needs and preferences, and mostly this is done automatically and without much self-reflection. Yet the inner self would gain much from understanding why these preferred qualities exist, because it is qualities rather than events that speak of the soul's purpose.

All things are fit for purpose, yet we ourselves have a lot to do before we discover what that purpose is. Where do we fit? If life's feedback shows a lack of fitness then we can try something else.

We need to push into life with a specific intention; the responses we get will be smooth and positive only if we align with our deepest goals. We may not grasp its fullest mystery but there exists a cosmic order and we have our own special place in it. Our life task is to find it – typically by following the spirit of our enthusiasm.

To function optimally within the cosmic order, we need to trust in our own inner aptitude and affiliate with it. Rather than seek it through an arduous process of analysis and strain, we can just sink into it by simply being true to ourselves in every moment. This is highly satisfying, and very empowering.

But what of the angelic dimension? The function of angels is to awaken within us resonance with the Divine, and we need to cultivate divine qualities – these are universally acknowledged – such things as love, creativity, truth and joy – and we each have our own special mix of them. We learn that by surrendering to something greater than ourselves, our own blend of these divine qualities brings us happiness. We then find that there is as much reliability in our spiritual competence, in a word, faith, as in our skilful worldly management.

TAURUS 1 – 5

POWER

There are very specific operating principles that are to be studied and mastered for the soul on Earth to thrive and expand. To be true to our own nature is the starting point, and to be open to the uncomfortable power of our spiritual essence is the dynamism that drives us towards a higher purpose. Abundance is promised, and will come provided we form the 'rainbow bridge' to link ourselves in communion with greater influences from the spiritual dimension. In the end though, all that we can ever hold on to is the echo of our experiences; all else soon fades.

The life-force that interpenetrates us is eternal and absolute, and there never has been, or will be, anything else in this or any other reality. To access its incomparable power, we have, at least for a while, to determine a specific unassailable course of action and stick to it at all costs. This mysteriously creates a state of being that inevitably brings about general foundation-level changes in the reality of our situation.

Such certainty of purpose registers even at a cellular level. We surrender fully to a compelling desire – and then we come to realise that we are in no way less than any other force of Nature, co-creating the fruits of our imagination. We can easily make physical the wealth of spiritual awareness that we possess, and so become as rich materially as we are spiritually. Or we can rise above social constraints – and encumbering attachments to emotional and physical comforts – satisfied entirely by the nourishing power of this high resonance with spirit.

TAURUS 1

A CLEAR MOUNTAIN STREAM

(RESOURCEFULNESS)

RUDHYAR: A CLEAR MOUNTAIN STREAM

AUTHENTIC SELF EXPRESSION

Pure, innocent spontaneity as a way of life

Moving out of the realm of potentiality and into the world of form we soon become an admixture of the very many impressions that impact upon us. Yet the very first condition is that of purity, we are what we are in essence and in innocence, nothing more than the distillation-seed of what has gone before.

Freedom is for those who depend on the power of their resourcefulness

A clear mountain stream is spirited, pure and free. In essence, so are we. The essence of who we are is life force, it is pure spirit, consciousness itself.

Resourcefulness is indicated because it arises out of these essential qualities. Like a stream racing onward, we dash headlong into a mysterious future with no reassurances except the sense that spirit always finds a way.

Spirit cannot know fear or doubt, its time frame is immediate so there is not a single moment between thought and action; not one moment's consideration is given to whether a thought or feeling is apt or risky. It is only when we forego spontaneity that the concept of risk arises. One of the risks we feel that we take is that by acting spontaneously in trusting in our naive feelings of desire we will forego better opportunities. Such doubt diminishes will and undermines the trust we place in ourselves.

However, we may indeed certainly trust in the irrepressibility of pure spirit. We will always feel the urge to move on – and, deep down, always feel strength in the certainty that as long as we are true, we are eternally safe, and will eventually find our optimal path.

The only activity that can significantly restrict our freedom is a self-selected intention, whether conscious or not. Our goals are the means by which we focus the mind, and pull together all the variables of a situation towards a given end. Very few people have learned how to focus on one thing at a time. To focus on more than one thing is to lose focus – it is not focus. High achievement is realised through an unswerving fidelity to some definite course of action. The stream's single purpose is to unite with the ocean.

Spontaneous action does not always lead to expected or even desired outcomes in the short term; emergencies can arise. These are to be interpreted as issues of urgent feedback, which call up previously unused potential in order to awaken new skills and so augment our toolbox of talents, furthering the depth and reach of our potential experience.

It is by trusting in the contents of this toolbox that we are freed of the constraints laid down by our circumstances. Patterned behaviour is for those who choose blind obedience for its predictable safety. Freedom is for those who depend on the power of their resourcefulness.

TAURUS 2

AN ELECTRICAL STORM

(TRANSFORMATION)

RUDHYAR: AN ELECTRICAL STORM

EPIPHANY OF LIGHT

The powerful, cosmic element of existence that can transform human consciousness

It can be a devastating shock to be exposed to cosmic energies within the constriction of the Earth plane, since the power of true spiritual knowledge simply cannot be fully assimilated into individual consciousness. Yet there is the hope of opening up to these higher forces to some significant degree, and thereby experiencing the revelation of vast possibilities for the expression of our spiritual aspect within a physical context.

Only if we accept inner transformation will we transform outer situations

A person is potentially as awesome as a thunderstorm, but most are too timid even to express unique opinions. This timidity is not a natural state whereas passion equivalent to a thunderstorm is.

Life throws up crises again and again – we can fear them or grasp them. Some people have learned to identify stormy life situations as special and welcome opportunities to stimulate them to rise to the challenges. By embracing these crises as opportunities, we awaken inner forces that enable us to cope, and also actually make us powerful. No challenge ever comes which we cannot answer fully and to our best advantage, and belief in this empowers us very deeply; it is an aspect of faith.

Tuning in to the nature of the electrical storm, we reconnect with the forces that birthed us. Magnetism, sound, vibration and release – these elemental events occur externally and within us. Excessive indulgence in comfort and security takes us away from the more profound aspects of who we are, and what we can do.

Only as much as we accept inner transformation are we able to transform outer situations, and the power to have our maximum impact on events must call up these inner cathartic forces of our nature eventually. If we cannot find some way to respond to storms then we will live ever in fear of them; equally if we deny that we ourselves are stormy then we are practising self-disempowerment.

Stress points to mismanagement, arising because we do not handle situations fully and instantly. Yet whatever comes up in our lives can be dealt with immediately and completely – to the exclusion of any storm – when we know how to access transformative energies within. All complexity is then reduced to this one simple and immediate imperative, how to access passionate power. The thunderstorm is not in two minds, nor patient.

Society, fearing individual passion and upsetting the status quo, trains us to toe the line; civilisation depends upon this. It can make us terrified that we will lose aplomb in public so we must maintain face. This false image allows for the build-up of great tensions, and also distorts our inner sense of self – until one day we wake up to the fact that we have capitulated, unknowingly giving up who we really are to seem acceptable.

A raging storm clears the air and allows us to re-centre in truth. When we realign with the authentic pole of our being, we connect once more with our ability fully and uniquely to dramatise our lives – present and future – with flair, so that our core values are undeniable and clearly expressed.

TAURUS 3

STEPS UP TO A LAWN BLOOMING WITH CLOVER

(HOPEFULNESS)

RUDHYAR: NATURAL STEPS LEAD TO A LAWN OF CLOVER IN BLOOM

DETERMINED EFFORT

The path of a humble aspirant towards self-fulfilment after seeing the light

Each of us is both passive and active as an agency by which spiritual energies interact with materiality; our life journey is impactful upon all that we touch, and this is reciprocal. We struggle towards fulfilling all that is within our nature by exerting ourselves with a humble yet trusting determination.

We need to be both optimistic and adaptable

Self-realisation is the outcome of both spontaneity and restraint – and we see, in the image of wild clover in a manicured lawn, an easy juxtaposition of both, each enhancing the magnetism of the other. The steps up speak to us of our hope of attainment.

Who we are is a matter of choice – specifically the series of innumerable selections that we have made since birth. In this image we are reminded that it is especially meaningful if we choose our lives to be aligned both with our sense of good order and our appreciation of wild natural beauty.

Most helpful, and possibly the ultimate wisdom, is the attainment, as an everyday condition, of the state of optimism. The danger with this is to fall prey to silly idealism, and practice a self-indulgent disregard of practical considerations and irresponsible beliefs in the glamour of the fantastic. Yet, with such a certain, optimistic attitude to life, every facet of our experience can be seen to have its own charm and logic.

Since we constantly expect and fully appreciate good things, then good things are attracted to us; the fruits of life are ours for the taking. Both of these attitudes are powerful and important – expectation and appreciation – because by force of mysterious magnetism together they attract whatever we truly desire.

Hopefulness is a force of Nature, and has its own special atmospheric quality. In some way it is a happy marriage between expectation and trust. It holds the twin conditions of desire for something particular, and acceptance that apparent failure is only ever temporary, and will always lead toward greater success.

Though subtle and sensitive, human spirit strengthened by hope is beyond measure, and indomitable. Mostly we live our lives out in a series of ordinary experiences until something extraordinary is attracted into our situations. Hopefulness is the spiritual practice of attracting more of what we want and less of what we don't want. People who hope for health and happiness are already *en route* to health and happiness, where the anxious, fearful ones are pulling towards them the fruits of their pessimism.

What is suggested with this imagery is nothing less than the possibility intuitively to grasp a sense of the operating principles of cosmic reality. There is interplay between freedom and form, giving out and getting back, ambition and acquiescence. This indicates that the core lesson for life on earth is that we need to be both optimistic and adaptable.

TAURUS 4

THE RAINBOW'S POT OF GOLD

(FAITH)

RUDHYAR: THE POT OF GOLD AT THE END OF A RAINBOW

PROMISE OF ABUNDANCE

The fruits that come from bridging between the Earth plane and the cosmic realms

In learning how to conduct ourselves appropriately we are creating a bridge between Heaven and Earth, communing with cosmic forces to achieve worldly abundance. This enjoyment of wealth comes only from an ability to have fair commerce with others. To inspire trust and deal with the trustworthy is implied, yet so too is the remembering in all world interactions of our spiritual heritage.

Faith brings the power to manifest

Faith is possibly the most treasured achievement of a person – it is an inner assurance that enables us to hold a steady course. It is built by belief and trust, and must be developed and used if it is to be a constant life practice that defines the faithful.

Until faith is adopted as a life path, we are in danger of being overwhelmed, sometimes catastrophically, by floods of emotion; yet when we do adopt it, we are promised a pot of gold. Indeed, Noah had faith that the rainbow was God's covenant, following a flood.

At higher levels of attainment we look for nothing tangible or external because the feeling of faith is itself better than gold. Yet normally, the valid expectation of material abundance acts as an incentive. Always there are physical tokens for whatever spirituality the self has brought into manifestation through its own efforts. It helps manifestation when we feel a heart-warming sense of gratefulness – and it is this feeling that rewards us for keeping the faith.

Gold is more than currency for exchange; it is a symbol of power. Faith is also power, and this power operates in two ways – by strengthening our resistance against false claims, and sharpening our focus of attention. Life will reflect back to us the implications of poor alignment whenever we wander off the track of our faith into unintelligent flights of fancy. Futility and loss of opportunity are the result.

People who trust in life and present their beliefs confidently and expectantly into the world typically are blessed with a feeling of being rich in a way that feels appropriate, wholesome and blessed.

Gold is also a symbol of purity and often used to commemorate sacredness, for example, in marriage or religion. In each case, religious, relational or financial, there is the repeated theme that gold links the material and spiritual.

This is because life is a matrix – that's what it is and all it is – an accommodation for the outpourings of mind and heart. We get back what we put out – an authentic expression in material form will always be representative of whatever we are within…even to the highest expression of our golden, faithful spirit.

TAURUS 5

WIDOW AT AN OPEN GRAVE

(REORIENTATION)

RUDHYAR: WIDOW AT AN OPEN GRAVE

CUTTING TIES WITH THE PAST

Coming to terms with the temporary nature of all relationships, positions and possessions

As much as we must exhale at the end of every breath, it is inevitable that we must lose our wealth and influence. The grasping that occurs as we cope with materiality is a major obstacle to soul evolution and if we are to optimise our progression, we must learn to let go of everything in the very moment of its completion. For a true seeker, grief is a debilitating emotion that must not be overindulged, so too is nostalgia.

The gate to freedom is in the ability to turn feelings around

Everything dies. We need to have the ability to release our attachments, and move our focus of attention away from what has passed. We are severely tested in life, often to the limits of our capability to cope, and to maintain the integrity of self we must be able to live with grief, and resist the descent into ineptitude born of distress.

One of the most debilitating features of the grief that follows the departure of a loved one is the sense that we are powerless. This is, of course, essentially false because it ignores the creative influence we have in which we are responsible for our own circumstances, all of them. Learning how to turn around these feelings of disempowerment is the gate to freedom and happiness.

The widow at the grave indicates our natural inclination to relate with certain special others with an open vulnerable heart. Our needs for warmth, companionship and comfort are usually tied up with one or two particular people. It is quite normal and not entirely unhealthy, at least to a certain extent, to invest our identity in these people.

Sometimes it takes great personal aplomb to be able to regroup and refocus; we are tested in this. Disappointments, loss and even grief can be transcended by a correct attitude of mind, so that by the true seeker even these most troubling events are seen as grist for the mill.

The ever-spiralling, eternal, evolutionary journey of the soul requires such examinations for its best progress. We simply cannot progress towards our fullest potential without enduring and learning how to cope with these seemingly impossible emotional trials.

Death is as much a beginning as an ending. We are profoundly challenged to come to terms with loss, to reorientate our intimate life circumstances, and to claim back whatever we had invested in those who leave us. Everything real is within us – what we cannot fully embody within ourselves is not truly ours, so the loss of anything external does not in fact rob us of anything essentially real within us.

This wisdom applies generally to every aspect of our lives. When we permit reality to become static, we are lost. Each moment is already gone in the instant of its arrival – life is death. The advanced being knows how to release completely and immediately all experiences – they are outworn the moment we recognise them.

TAURUS 6 – 10

APPLICATION

Sometimes we need our community to help pull us up; we feel real and of relevance when we acknowledge the groundedness in some collective achievement, which renews our hope. As a result of the process of suffering and rescue we are more open to Spirit and feel once again encouraged to imagine a bright future, as indeed we must if we are to complete this exercise in self-rescue. Our capacity to employ faith to turn darkness into light begins within the context of relationship with family and close friends and can evolve into the general spiritual wisdom of altruistic service.

Having power, we expect to apply it, to resist imposition and to overcome obstacles in pursuit of our desires, and this expectation is a compelling motivating force that reaches out to find mountains to climb and oceans to cross. Inevitably, issues arise. Often, dark energies become quite dominant, and we have to come to terms with choices where we are absolutely challenged on matters of principle. It takes greatness of self-assurance to trust that the dark side will lead to the light, and indeed that there is no other path available to travel if one is to awaken at the very deepest levels of self.

The supreme test – to master physical reality – requires the attitude of a magician, who applies powerful will, and a profound inner sense of spiritual heritage, in order to shift manifestation around. In all realms, whether higher or lower, the magician, with great aplomb and elegance, plays out the role of creator. Everything is seen on a symbolic level as a representation of the deeper hidden truth – and this way of seeing life becomes a path that supports continual self-renewal. It is found by the wise rather counter-intuitively that optimal personal influence arises through complete self-application in service to the needs of others.

TAURUS 6

A BRIDGE BEING BUILT ACROSS A GORGE

(CHANNELLING)

RUDHYAR: A CANTILEVER BRIDGE ACROSS A DEEP GORGE

OVERCOMING

Finding a way to end separation and form group consciousness

Following a catastrophic setback, it can feel like the Earth has opened up to swallow us. The best way to counteract the sense of separation and desolation is to engage in a challenging community project that gives substantial proof of our involvement and importance in life.

We optimise achievement by opening up to a higher power

The gorge is a natural obstacle and is a challenge that requires real focus to conquer. The spirit of conquest is an inherent aspect of humanity's evolutionary curiosity that has taken us to the Moon and beyond. In essence, we are able to become free from much of the inconvenience of physical life through a refusal to be defeated, and finding the application it requires to prevail.

If instead, we look for shortcuts, then the ultimate purpose is lost. We may arrive sooner – yet we will be poorer, deprived of the wealth of the experience, and the rewards from its tougher lessons. It is foolish to believe that obstacles are bad things to be quickly dealt with. They are indicators of imperfections in our condition, also lessons and training exercises for the developing seeker.

Those who always seek the easy way to avoid challenges inevitably cannot be trusted to back up their word. They have little to give of value that can be relied upon. To be master of our circumstances we have to learn mastery, and this is possible only when we face and overcome challenges.

Heroic types apply the depth and breadth of their conscious abilities and qualities to transform physical limitation into personal or social assets. They refuse to be defeated and insist on seeing through their intentions by force of will. Strong clear will can resolve an impasse.

There is a mystery in this – the secret of channelling – that when we apply ourselves completely to a task, we are assisted as if by, and perhaps even actually by, external subtle forces. Some call these angels or spirit guides, some see them as aspects of the superconscious facet of the psyche. Whatever they are called or understood to be, they need to be invoked in order to become useful.

We have humbly to acknowledge that sometimes we depend upon such agencies in order for the best of our inner qualities to emerge into life, especially as we deal with adversity. The ego has its own purposes and advantages but sometimes we need to let go of it in order to break through to higher dimensions of life, within which we can achieve otherwise impossible outcomes.

By opening up to a higher power – whether we see that as within or without – we further optimise human intelligence, and we benefit directly in the development of practical instinct. By this we obtain real benefit from the employment of our previously-latent capabilities.

TAURUS 7

A WOMAN OF SAMARIA

(AWAKENING)

RUDHYAR: THE WOMAN OF SAMARIA AT THE ANCESTRAL WELL

BREAKTHROUGH TO A NEW SPIRITUAL LEVEL

Push of the past diverted to a new direction by an unusually powerful spiritual experience

A new way of life, one that demonstrates that we are evolving towards realisation, can only ever arise out of the ashes of what has been assimilated of the old. In order to receive knowledge of the creative potential of Spirit, we must move away completely from what of the old life that not serve our aspirations to progress.

In order to achieve our potential we need to awaken into honest self-realisation

The image of this immoral biblical character warns us of the challenge to steer clear of a tendency to resort to a carefree dissolute attitude – seeking passing pleasure instead of lasting joy – as a distorted compensation for feeling the lack of any real meaning in life.

Nonetheless, whatever our background and current circumstances, we are fundamentally an aspect of goodness and truth. We may lose direction and get totally caught up in the ardent pursuit of fame and fortune, or the complacency of accepting the mediocre status quo, seeking for example the pleasure of drugs and alcohol to compensate – yet we will quickly reassert our primary spiritual qualities when confronted with a profound crisis. We can so easily forget this important and extraordinary fact of existence – this coherence of our own essential divinity.

It is this fact that creates in us an instinct for higher things. Through it we attract opportunities to open up our sense of what life really is all about at the level of sacredness, and what goodness we can offer. The inclination to serve and be kind, to give freely of ourselves to strangers, is evidence of our irrefutable spiritual nature.

When motivated by the hope of honest self-realisation, we are actually capable of plumbing the taboo depths of life to the utmost reaches of our authentic being. We may be shunned by society for what is considered prohibited behaviour. However, perhaps because of her sincerity of self, Jesus made himself known to her – she was blessed by spirit and so validated – and subsequently became celebrated throughout history.

In order to find entirely gratifying fulfilments, our strength of will is expressed by our indomitable striving for successful realisation of specific goals, whatever the price. Unless we awaken and express all of our abilities, actual and potential, we can lose heart. Yet if we do awaken to them, then we are blessed by spirit.

Typically we all concern ourselves only with our own business and that of the family, yet is it not beyond us, as developed beings, to surrender our own pursuits whenever it seems more appropriate to serve another's needs. At this level of awareness, we come to see that in a subtle way everyone's business is our business; thus we serve ourselves as we serve others.

We can even reach levels of insight where our trust and our love of adventure are so strong that we can easily and happily submit to any situation that life presents us, knowing that it will serve us benevolently – whatever the outcome. This is awakening, when we find that degree of faith that we know all is well and, whatever occurs, will always be well.

TAURUS 8

A SLEIGH WITHOUT SNOW

(SUSTAINMENT)

RUDHYAR: A SLEIGH ON LAND UNCOVERED BY SNOW

ALIGNMENT WITH THE FUTURE

The importance and value of anticipating what inevitable changes are coming

Following a major setback and significant process of letting go, we must look forward to the future with optimism and imagination. What we have managed to learn and earn become the building blocks and resources of a future as yet to be created out of our thoughts.

A creative optimist will make something out of nothing

Although a sleigh is usually associated with snow, there could be many other uses for it that are not contingent upon a very specific set of natural phenomena.

With the right imaginative attitude of mind, we will find sustainment in Nature for all our needs to be met, since Nature's key feature is prodigality. Every need we have can be satisfied by the resources we find available. If we expect to find abundance, then we will find it in life at every turn.

It is a question of aligning ourselves elegantly with what is; only then will we be able to resonate with the full potential inherent in any set of circumstances. Our expectation itself is a creative force that attracts satisfaction.

Surely this is how we cope with everyday living? We rise to deal with whatever comes up, with whatever we can find close at hand. To do so often requires that we change our perception from pessimism to optimism.

There is magic in our ability to make something out of nothing. Firstly we have to see that there can never be nothing – that there is always something available. Secondly, we need to use the mind as a tool for change – it can manipulate reality to conform to our imagination.

What is the alternative? A life-attitude based on needless acceptance of defeat – tolerance of today's frustration in the vague hope of a better tomorrow? This viewpoint is indeed widespread, and is the cause of so much disappointment and cynicism.

Trust is a learned skill of the mind – it requires that we look confidently upon the present and optimistically towards the future. With good humour we downplay our frustrations, which we learn to interpret as signals that a mental readjustment is called for.

TAURUS 9

A CHRISTMAS TREE DECORATED

(SYMBOLISATION)

RUDHYAR: A FULLY DECORATED CHRISTMAS TREE

CONFIDENCE IN A NEW DAWN

When there is darkness, we need to seek out the light and move towards it

We see now that even in a cold, dark period we have the inner wherewithal to bring light and joy. Much of the cynicism arising out of religiosity is burned off by the realisation that the spirituality of our faith is what we used to transform painful situations, loss and dark, debilitating grief into optimism, joy and sharing.

The spiritual ideal of reciprocity is applied through ritualizing the celebration of giving

At Christmas especially, we enjoy fully the abundance of the material world, even to the extent that we feel joy when someone else is receiving the pleasure of having something nice.

Symbolised in material form, this is a spiritual wisdom – that the joy of another brings joy to us. In other words the spiritual ideal of reciprocity is applied through practical ritual.

It is a feature of the distortion of the modern world that selfishness is pursued as if it were a way to happiness. Older, better established communities have not lost sight of the relationship between sharing and personal satisfaction and the importance of balancing self-interest with kindness.

Opportunities to share need to be created, preserved and honoured because this is a practice essential for self-renewal. The act of giving releases emotional blockages, which would otherwise stifle growth and, in time, cause dysfunction and discomfort. The inclusion of ritual raises the action to the level of sacredness, and so honours and empowers the process.

Whenever this ritual has widespread significance, a further societal dimension comes to exist; therefore the connections that bind individuals into a community need to be re-made from time to time to keep them alive and powerful. Shared visions need to be reiterated at the level of extended family and tribe. We may perhaps find it tedious to re-enact old patterns of behaviour, yet their deeper meaning is very potent.

The unification of material and spiritual messages is of profound consequence. By simultaneously making an ideal out of material reciprocity, and by giving substance to spiritual practice, we bridge the worlds of the seen and the unseen.

Thus we demonstrate the continual re-emergence of spirit into form, an enactment of love symbolised in a Christmas present as indeed it was in the Ideal Human whom we are remembering and celebrating.

TAURUS 10

A RED CROSS NURSE

(ENLISTMENT)

RUDHYAR: A RED CROSS NURSE

COMPASSION

The raising of love from the personal level to the level of sacredness in service

We are able to take our powerful faith into service of humanity to help others make the journey themselves form darkness into light. Personal love can be raised to a higher level as we radiate our light not just to close loved ones but to all and everyone.

The mystery of who we are reveals itself as we serve others

It is only through the surrender of self-importance that we can truly realise the importance of self. A mystery reveals itself to us as we serve others – the hidden truth of who we are, and what really matters to us.

Even when we don't feel the urge to serve, it may be helpful to act as though we are quite humanitarian. This is provided we guard against the risk that such a superficial approach may hinder our grasping the deeper meaning in service. Certainly this often enhances our social reputation, and tends to lead us to a more subtle realisation of the value of renunciation.

Yet truly, for its own sake, the loving heart seeks opportunities to care for others with a steady, constant concern; rewards and success are secondary issues.

The benefits are long-term and sometimes rather imperceptible, so we also need trust. Basically, there is no greater path of self-realisation than to help others, even when this is at our own personal expense of effort and emotional bruising. By doing so, we affirm our own maturity since it is more child-like to need support and more parent-like to give it. This affirmation is itself a force that propels us towards greater wisdom and emotional balance.

A Red Cross nurse is just one example of a person who has enlisted to dedicate themselves in a committed way to a worthwhile, enduring project. There are many equivalent paths available, one of which will certainly offer challenges and demands that are appropriate to our particular skills and resources.

It is entirely consistent with the essential qualities of being human that we will look for an ideal occupation in order to ground our spiritual principles. The philosophy of spiritual wisdom is of no consequence if it lacks application, so we must seek to create a life that demonstrates in real terms what we believe in and hold to be of lasting importance.

Thus we renew daily our ability to put aside our need for ego-recognition – and by doing so we may start to feel a dissolving of our sense of separateness. When my-self is surrendered, there may even be occasions when the mystical awareness of all-self is glimpsed.

TAURUS 11 – 15

AUTHENTICITY

We develop a mature ego and become conscious of who we are by the flowering of our physical urges, first into emotionality and then self-reflection. The inward, feminine, stage is contrasted by the outward expression of self-image that seeks to present itself as having the trappings of cultural alignment, for example what is currently fashionable. This brings with it the burdens that inevitably arise when enacting desire – our appetites exact their price. Temporary unburdening may well bring us in contact with childhood behaviours of play and even deep connection with unconscious pre-birth rememberings, yet we have to struggle on against adversity in order to deepen the mature gravitas of real character.

However absorbing and supportive of self-love, the developing of personal power through overcoming challenges is the lesser game. The soul's magnificence is no dim light to be defined by such empty recreation; it is an aspect of Divine Light and has no limit. Its creative power can be better expressed by taking over the stewardship of growing things; it wants to build something new and lasting.

Authenticity of desire is known to be the seed-form of building, whose potency is magnified according to the degree of passion with which it is vibrated. The physical body is used as a tool to tune up the desire-nature to a high pitch of passion. Like an arrow quivering with maximised potential, vibrant desire is then released towards a specific well-defined vision, which then simply must become real. This is no airy-fairy dreamer playing mind-games – it is an artisan whose purpose is to serve by working hard to make actual things happen.

TAURUS 11

A WOMAN SPRINKLING FLOWERS

(CARE)

RUDHYAR: A WOMAN WATERING FLOWERS IN HER GARDEN

REFINEMENT OF THE EGO

Concentration of the mind on developing a mature sense of self

As much as a flower is the resultant expression of sap rising and bud forming, so we can see the ego go through a process of stages in its development, beginning with physical urges and maturing through emotional experiences towards full understanding. This process wins our full and loving, though possessive, attention as we nurture our own personal qualities as would a gardener cultivating their flowers.

Caring is valid for its own sake

This is to do with the high level of stewardship by which we build everything around us into an enduring organism for our own fulfilment. Included in this is our requirement to offer succour to those in need, because we want to do that to feel good.

However, we must be careful not to get too interested in superficial satisfactions and a wasteful worrying about petty concerns. Our ability to help has limits, so that extravagant, foolish expenditure of energy will disempower us from assisting properly with more deserving causes.

The key principle is care. A simple act of watering flowers is evidence of heart-felt interest in the wellbeing of things and presumably, by extension, people. The act of caring is valid for its own sake, because it cultivates the quality of Care, no matter whether the recipient is plant, animal or person – or indeed even deserving.

When we are strong and clear, there is a natural eagerness to pour ourselves into every potentiality of living. We do so by offering to help wherever we can.

Also, here is evidence of the easy and rewarding partnership between man and Nature. The image is a symbol of the soul's determination to give constant and tangible manifestation of its creative powers, so that a natural profusion tends to match its inner generosity of spirit.

When we are mature, and free of excessive neuroses, then we inevitably feel responsible for the welfare of the world. Then we have sensitivity to the requirements of those we meet, and the willingness to soften their burden to some extent.

Rewards, for this level of interest in others, are very great. They may well take the subtle form of a feeling of wellbeing, yet also there are usually more tangible compensations. Of course, the recompense can come from an indirect source, apparently unconnected to what we have done. A Sufi teaching suggests that we cannot do work of any kind, at any time, which is not eventually paid for – because otherwise a mysterious, cosmic, energetic balance would be upset.

TAURUS 12

WINDOW SHOPPERS

(VISUALISATION)

RUDHYAR: A YOUNG COUPLE WINDOW-SHOPPING

FRUITS OF DESIRE

The externalisation of the desire principle expressed in tangible form

In contrast to the inwardness of self-nurture, we also find cause to see what can be found useful of society's fruits, and we look outwards and enjoy expressing ourselves by shopping around for things to give substance to our desire to be known. Such interactions are forces that impress upon us and shape the developing self.

Desire is an authentic feeling and must be allowed

It is all too easy to put ourselves down and simply dismiss desires as unrealizable. Yet desire is an authentic feeling and, on the path of happiness, must not be denied. It is certain of course that false desire often comes from ego, but normally we can intuitively distinguish the true word of the soul.

Rather than practising self-denial, spiritually it is more meaningful to realise and present new possibilities of personal potential. This is made known through the agency of reckless imagination; Cinderella represents the principle.

It is helpful to consult our emotions and check whether there is good alignment between desires and deeds. If these do not align then ambiguous messages are being sent out that will lead to delay or failure.

Having discovered, upon examination, that further potential is within reach, then action is called for. Some people dream and dally; others live with a constant, restless inner demand for movement towards greater success.

Aware of our personal magnetism, we expect to win cooperation. A clear and detailed outcome is visualised, and empowered by anticipation of fulfilment. In this way imagination is employed as a tool of magick. The words ‘magick’ and ‘imagination’ share a linguistic root, pointing to the power we have to influence future outcomes through the process of visualisation.

Also we need to use our imagination to adjust to feedback. The first image of what we desire was perhaps naive or poorly crafted, so versions must evolve in response to experience, a course correction as for a wayward vehicle.

Some people ‘see the glass half empty’, and go on to use their power of mind to create a future that enables them to validate their pessimism. Others seek to develop their creative capacity so that they can fully enjoy the fruits of their desire. It takes skill and the appropriate mental attitude – but then, what doesn’t? To such optimists, ‘failure’ is seen as no more threatening than apt and helpful feedback en route to victory. They have discovered that on-going realignment, in response to experience, is actually a true path of self-awareness. Paradoxically, and perhaps surprisingly, failure very often serves us to a greater degree than success.

TAURUS 13

A MAN HANDLING BAGGAGE

(INDUSTRY)

RUDHYAR: A PORTER CARRYING HEAVY BAGGAGE

MATERIAL ACQUISITION

The pull of materiality leads us to seek possessions and improvement of our circumstances

Involvement with society's availability of material abundance inevitably attracts heavy responsibility and habits of gain and acquisitiveness. These are the qualities of the material world and they make demands upon us.

That we serve is more important than whom we serve

Frequently, tasks appear that could become nothing more than drudgery if performed reluctantly without protest. The porter is in danger of losing all ambition and losing his sense of self-worth if he does not find a way to approach his work positively.

The key to life-satisfaction, whether in the context of work, relationships, home or social life, lies not in the externals but in the way we internalise experiences. Generally speaking, no matter in what circumstances, a joyful person will experience joy, a miserable one, misery.

In this example, when facing potentially soul-destroying conditions, we need to look differently at the matter in hand – either at the detail or at the wider picture. We could challenge ourselves to become absolutely perfect at the task in hand – placing each bag 'exactly so' and delighting in their colours and shapes. Or we could discipline ourselves constantly to serve the spirit of industry itself and become a conscious supporter of Work as a spiritual principle.

A person needs to be useful, the integrity of the community requires this – and in fact affirms that, on some level, all functions have equal importance. For example, when garbage handlers go on strike, the health of the city is jeopardised.

It matters less what we do, than that we serve in some appropriate capacity. It is vitality itself that we seek to express, which is not at all dependent upon the specificity of the activity itself.

A happy life requires that we learn to adjust ourselves to circumstances. When we do this properly, as a spiritual practice, then we find that what we actually have is the better option compared with what we thought we wanted.

We come to learn through this that we have greater strength and wider, deeper resources than we could ever have imagined. It is not the case that getting what we want leads to happiness; contentment actually comes from learning to want what we get.

TAURUS 14

SHELLFISH GROPING AND CHILDREN PLAYING

(EMERGENCE)

RUDHYAR: ON THE BEACH, CHILDREN PLAY WHILE SHELLFISH GROPE AT THE EDGE OF THE WATER

SIMPLE PLEASURES

There is wisdom in finding a balance between work and play

Today when we play as children do, it is more for relaxation rather than being an unsophisticated 'play and learn' joyfulness, it is contrasted to work and stress. We then philosophise about play, promote the idea of it and explain its importance to each other, rather than naturally default to it whenever we feel like it.

When we improve ourselves, then others also do the same

Whether we think of shellfish groping around in murky depths or kids making up games to learn skills, at all levels of existence, the absolute imperative of individual survival is self-sufficiency – even if the 'individual' is in fact an individual group or species.

The community is a field of potential for the emergence of the individual. Note that self-abnegation is not the only true spiritual path. It is doubtful whether at this period in human evolution it is a true path at all. We are hard-wired for survival of the self – for good reason. If we have learned how to be authentic and unique individuals, then an advanced level of awareness would permit altruism as a spiritual expression. Without such a high degree of enlightenment, this behaviour cannot be authentic, and therefore strikes a false note.

Lower orders have a wider perspective on 'self': the ant identifies itself with the colony, and expresses self-sufficiency of the colony, even at the expense of the particular ant. The cell of a human body is equivalent. By feeling the connection between lower and higher, we grasp that the individual's path of self-expression is not separate from the group's process of evolution. Each is not only interdependent, but is an aspect of the other.

Evolution unfolds not as step-by-step ascension of a ladder, but rather like the mist clears, in a non-linear fashion – and at different times certain cells or individuals lead off in a new way. This is self-discovery and is seen as the emergence of the individual coming out of the group. The experience of high profile has a special quality that requires a clear statement, since the individual is subject to constant group pressure.

They stand for a while, then fall back to allow another centre stage. The group shines its light of attention onto its current hero, who elevates one and all, and is later brought down by the general population.

Masters do not waste energy by attempting to raise the group; such a divergence of focus would diffuse their will. They wait at the pleasure of the mass until opportunity arises, then strike out for themselves clear and strong, drawing support from those around who develop beside them.

Being ourselves is the highest service we can offer the group and the universe. Yet the self has rhythms: now active, now passive. They vibrate in order to sound our true note, adding to the harmony of the whole. People who believe they are behaving altruistically are deluding themselves; there is always a selfish motivation underlying the apparently humble aspiration to serve. Our current task is to find a way to be who we are, and to use our community as a means to that end. As it happens, there is no better way to serve our fellows.

TAURUS 15

A MAN MUFFLED UP WITH A RAKISH SILK HAT

(SOPHISTICATION)

RUDHYAR: HEAD COVERED WITH A SILK HAT, MUFFLED AGAINST THE COLD, A MAN BRAVES A STORM

COPING WITH ADVERSITY

Pushing towards improvements force us to develop in character

Anyone who has cultivated a mature ability to integrate with society, and who can carry responsibilities and maintain a healthy approach to play and relaxation, needs then to face up willingly to a few difficulties, cope well with crises and not fall down. This is the stuff of a truly trustworthy person who has depth and substance.

In dramatizing the true inner self, we do not identify with appearances

No matter what degree of sophistication we employ – dressing up in the latest expensive fashions and so on – the absolute integrity of the self will shine through. Our costumes and manners may describe us, but they do not define us. It is said '*manners maketh man*' – this is false; it is the man that makes manners.

We all have our roles to play in life, and it is entirely appropriate for us to be fully aware of what that role is and how best to enact it. Yet all we are ever doing is dramatizing the true inner self.

There is always a risk that we over-identify with the drama and, by surrendering to the image, lose sensibility of our deeper impulses. Then we mistake pleasure for joy and glister for gold.

Yet the risk is worthwhile because, when acting out an imaginary persona, we can uncover a new and authentic aspect of character. Through experimentation, a constant rediscovery of the greater powers latent in selfhood supports superb self-confidence.

Confidence is power. Through this expansion of selfhood we learn that the human spirit has supremacy over all possible limitations or embarrassments. No scenario arises that is beyond our ability to find an appropriate role for.

Society will put pressure on us to dictate the limits of our scope. Yet the developed individual is unwilling to be truly constrained, and becomes able to use all their experience to produce a creative persona that elegantly responds to the needs of the moment, for an unbounded range of possibilities.

We remember that is it only a persona – the surface dressing of something so profound, so mysterious, so undiscovered, that most of the time we can only ever show the merest clue to our deepest character through what clothes we wear and what mannerisms we adopt.

TAURUS 16 – 20

COMMON SENSE

In trying to confirm that we have realized our desires, the emotional journey is one where we seek signs both from sacred cultural teaching and from natural phenomena. We learn to make the very best of what we were born with and how to access deep reserves of survival-level passion when we feel seriously threatened. The sense of belonging to a community and enjoying its amenities is further evidence that we are valued and so confirms that we have value.

Things continue the way they are going, and become less energetic, unless impacted by a force equal to the mighty task of resisting this universal, cosmic entropy. To best serve the needs of a naturally-degenerative community, we must learn how to be such a force – to be creative and assert values, yet be flexible according to what is practically possible, thus demonstrating mastery in management.

There is no moderate way to cause to exist that which previously did not exist – because, symbolised on the deepest brute level, tectonic plates are crashing together to make new mountains. What we think of as originality is actually nothing less than the remodelling of the physical universe, rebuilding of reality into new forms, a substantive revolution of materiality itself. Learning how this all works bestows a lightness of being, vast and subtle. In this expanded state we can grasp a strange truth – that, although we must exert our personal authority as an obvious imperative, it is ultimately futile, and an offence against common sense to expect to shift collective realities very much.

TAURUS 16

OLD MAN ATTEMPTING VAINLY TO REVEAL THE MYSTERIES

(TENACITY)

RUDHYAR: AN OLD TEACHER FAILS TO INTEREST HIS PUPILS IN TRADITIONAL KNOWLEDGE

REVELATION

Only when old ways have clearly failed can new knowledge be discovered and presented

Every single moment is new - we stand now in a new reality and find that old wisdom is simply inadequate to explain what is the case now; it cannot guide us completely and so we look for and find a new perspective. We try to explain it to others, but with few expectations, and no attachment to success.

The highest reward is in process not outcome

The old man keeps trying to demonstrate what he has learned of life's meaning. It is important mainly so that he can reveal ultimate secrets of life actually to himself. As a life path, this degree offers constant proof that all life is ephemeral and nothing is what it seems. Ambition therefore is clearly foolish – yet since all is folly, nothing is folly. Realizing this, one wins the freedom to be exactly what one is: nothing more, nothing less.

Through study he is aware of how transient reality is, and therefore how inadequate is any attempt to explain the patterns and equations of life. The mystery of life is not the same for everyone and any attempt to impress our perception upon another is pointless. All that can be done is to awaken ourselves so that others awaken by resonance. A teacher's deeper purpose therefore is to learn what they can about themselves.

So the determination to dramatise to others our own sense of what is real, and the tenacious, repeated stirring-to-effort, is motivated largely by the promise of personal self-fulfilment. The need to share our understandings with another is as much to do with our need for union as it is any compulsion to instruct.

True teaching is based on resonance not ideas. To be known, knowledge must be experienced – as both the presence and absence of a quality or belief. The revelation of both aspects of any teaching is required. A master is indifferent to outcome, knowing that eventually a determined student will learn both sides of what is needed.

The 'self' is an energy configuration, therefore subject to entropy. Because it is kept awake when energised by conflict, the teacher chooses material of a provocative nature, in order to create a revolt in the student. Such an attitude is conducive to transformational growth for those who step up and choose to stay with the process. It takes this constant friction to maintain an uncompromising determination to fulfil our potential.

Realisation is of great value and has cosmic as well as personal importance. Both the means, and the result, is an uncompromising integrity of vision. However, such single-minded focus on the mysteries tends to make us rather unworldly, and we understand that practicalities are not always uppermost in mind.

Tenacity is the means not the end. Reality is sufficiently accommodating that any determined attitude is a valid life-path – and to develop an absolute never-say-die approach, we need insuperable challenges. Thus, difficulty and dispiriting results may well be the proper circumstances for a true seeker who wants more grit. When we are lucky or courageous enough to find a path that we can commit to, then the perfect task is one that can never be accomplished finally or fully. This is because the process, not the outcome, is the reward.

TAURUS 17

A BATTLE BETWEEN THE SWORDS AND THE TORCHES

(RESOLUTION)

RUDHYAR: A SYMBOLICAL BATTLE BETWEEN 'SWORDS' AND 'TORCHES'

CONFRONTING INNER DUALITY

Life is a struggle between external and internal opposing forces

In seeking further and further clarification of a newly-discovered truth, we are required to develop warrior qualities and fight the real forces of ignorance, domination and greed. Indecision is a fatal flaw for a warrior - who must reduce matters to good and evil, black and white, and choose definitively between this or that.

We must learn to discern between what ennobles us and what betrays spirit

Wants and needs are not always the same; necessity is rarely kind enough to indulge our pleasures much. Yet mind is a sword that cuts through to the nub of any matter and guides us to the right path. Yet there is often a contrary compulsion to follow what we hold a torch for and go against best strategy. Refusing to depend upon the past, the seeker turns warrior, battling against internal issues that can be seen as the soul versus the ego; we learn to face the need to choose – this or that; this degree is about the polarisation of values.

Distracted by things of secondary importance, we can lose self-competence. Yet distraction itself is needed if we are to learn how better to concentrate our attention on appropriate matters. We must learn discernment to know the difference between what is and what is not appropriate. The primary concern surely must always be to demonstrate and develop competence at being ourselves at the most profound level we can reach.

With care, we can learn how to look beneath the surface of the things that come and go, to find a centre deep and true. In every event or thing, however transient it may be, there is a central cause that speaks eloquently to us of its essence-nature. Whether we give our full enlightened attention to the heart of a matter has great consequence, because attention illuminates our path to the future, and shapes our very being.

Life is a glorious struggle – a constant full-on battle between what we must do to survive, and the purposes we pursue in order to give our life a meaning beyond survival and comfort. On this battlefield we are raised or we fall. Nobility of spirit is the true reward that can be enjoyed to the end of our days on Earth – and beyond.

A tangible benefit, as we learn to distinguish the important aspects in a situation, is mastery in organisational skills. Understanding how things work and how to make things work, is magick. And what skill is of greater value to a magician than his ability to discern the key to a matter – and to know how and when to turn it?

Yet personal power is neither omnipotent nor everlasting. So we learn, whether by example or bitter experience, that the wise respect the power of all others. True personal power is as much expressed in our ability to accept and adapt to the inevitable as it is to change the unacceptable.

Life requires us to choose between this and that; wisdom comes from finding the resolution of which to pursue. These choices define us, creating our identity. We must discern between trivial and of consequence, wants and needs, struggle and surrender, that which ennobles, and that which betrays the spirit. Then we gain mastery over our lives and become excellent at managing the changes to suit our preferences and principles.

TAURUS 18

A WOMAN HOLDING A BAG OUT OF A WINDOW

(FACILITATION)

RUDHYAR: WOMAN AIRING AN OLD BAG THROUGH THE OPEN WINDOW OF HER ROOM

EMPTYING THE MIND

Distortions of thought, belief and habit purified through meditation and open-mindedness

A mind that is conditioned to make judgements about right and wrong creates a prideful ego that limits the soul's evolution. It must become open and then cleansed of bigotry and prejudice.

Neither visionary intention nor mundane ability is more spiritual than the other

If we are dissatisfied with the way things are, we can set about bringing about change. This image – a woman and a bag – is very commonplace, rather like shopping, and shows someone in the process of fulfilling her needs. Many things in life are straightforward enough – yet we must not mishandle them if we are to deal properly with matters at hand. If there is no food in the larder, we need to go shopping rather than just hang a bag out of the window.

Every single purpose we have in life is of some consequence. The functionality of living is multifaceted, and so often seemingly trivial and mundane. Yet the soul's ministry is universal, and every activity is a spiritual experience to the developed being.

Sharing this awareness with other people, and noticing that they are engaged in a soulful act – as indeed we are ourselves – actually creates love, harmony and beauty. It is a very high achievement to bring spirituality into normal daily routines.

For any particular purpose, of greater or of lesser consequence, personal effectiveness is optimised when we maintain awareness of soul consciousness. All the elements of our experience are then commandeered in service towards our highest life attainments. At this level of complete commitment, body and soul level, life is zestful and meaningful.

The facilitation of our life's dream comes down to negotiating the nuts and bolts in real terms. The distance between where we are now, and where we want to be, is transited by a combination of visionary intention and mundane effectiveness. Neither should be seen as more spiritual than the other because worldly matters can be made into spiritual expression by having awareness that they are.

A visionary ideal is emblematic of the soul's aspirations towards self-perfection. Such visionary dreams can find no place in real life except to the extent that they fulfil the needs and hopes of our community as much as our own – and this is achieved only by interaction at the level of the mundane.

The true identity of any entity, including the soul, is only ever relational and has no meaning unless there is interaction. These interactions inevitably facilitate further self-expression and achievement of purpose – so being open to other ideas and ways of being is always helpful.

TAURUS 19

A NEWLY FORMED CONTINENT

(ORIGINALITY)

RUDHYAR: A NEW CONTINENT RISING OUT OF THE OCEAN

PURE RECEPTIVITY

When the mind is open then spirit can enter

A mind that is free of the constriction of staunch belief and moralistic attitudes is free to be spontaneous. Then it is responsive to unconscious upwellings of inspiration creating new thoughts - out of which new realities can emerge and rise up.

Changing things takes power

Raw substance emerges on earth through the interaction of unimaginable forces that can push tectonic plates into mountain ranges and form new continents. Within each individual the same potency is available; those who claim it have access to awesome creative power – the originality which brings new matter into existence.

The very ground of our existence is shaped by personal experience to conform to our desires. In other words, at this intensity of passionate involvement with life at its most basic level, substance is shifted to conform to the intention of individual will. That which is substantial, and that which is not, are continually shifting and changing, one into the other. Matter and energy interchange throughout eternity, in a long, slow, endless dance without limits of expression. Through cycle upon cycle, reality is reworked into different demonstrations of form by the constant process of recreation. The human mind, when exercised by consciousness, can stimulate these foundation-level shifts in reality.

Doing so is both evidence of, and the celebration of, our ability to connect with both physical and cosmic worlds. This is the exact purpose of human existence, to be the bridge between spirit and matter.

This is none other than the dramatic exposition of a profound cosmic truth – that humanity has the ability to constantly re-establish itself, and transform its complete character and circumstances, according to whatever new powers and opportunities may present themselves to whosoever is ready and willing to grasp the nettle and claim such authority.

Unlikely as it may sound, the entire face of the universe is subject to this process. It takes a mighty confidence to know and trust this, yet with such confidence, we can remodel our own reality entirely.

However it is necessary to balance power with wisdom. Just because we can does not mean that we should. Our genius to exert influence has its own risks – the danger is that we could find cause for upset in everything and simply construct a life of futile turmoil trying to fix what is not broken or what cannot be changed.

At a very high degree of attainment, the individual will experience this capability as the gift to establish a link into the absolute stream of life force that descends through the crown as a flow of energy and comes to rest eventually in the origination of entirely new version of substantial materiality.

TAURUS 20

WIND, CLOUDS AND HASTE

(EXALTATION)

SPIRITUAL FORCES

RUDHYAR: WISPS OF WING-LIKE CLOUDS STREAMING ACROSS THE SKY

Energies and beings from other realms expressing through our willing participation

Each step we take towards soul-realisation is matched by the soul, so blessed and supported by unseen forces – which can be called angels or explained as the operation of the super-conscious aspect of self. Their signature often appears to us, always disguised and in metaphorical form, especially following a significant breakthrough. From this we can gain clues to what might be our best course of direction for the next step of our long journey.

The ego's exaltation lies in the depth of its stability during changes

Transiency – symbolised by racing clouds across the sky – stimulates a renewal of vitality. Each momentary scene of our lives is a picture of how various forces have found dynamic equilibrium to express one particular fleeting truth of existence; each new scenario is another examination to see if we can handle it elegantly.

That which distinguishes us and our way of doing things from others is called ego, which means 'I am'. It gives shape to a unique set of attitudes, beliefs, habits and perceptions that spin the divine message into its own pattern of expression, and of course our interactions in the world subjects each of us to the spin of others. We would become dizzily disoriented if the ego had less aplomb; it actually needs to feel a little self-important to do its job, which is to bring the necessary stability to cope with life's changes.

Constancy of change creates the illusion of superficiality; it often seems that not much in life has meaning or even consequence. This view is a reflection of the instability of an underdeveloped ego. By investing more of ourselves, more passionately, in the details of what's happening, here and now, during ordinary, conventional and mundane events, the ego can develop its necessary strength to measure up to life on our own terms.

What ripens within a mature individual is masterly efficiency to bring some control and stability even to non-ordinary events unfolding during the transitional stages of evolutionary, or possibly revolutionary, crises.

Having mastered two important control issues – what to influence and how to exert that influence – we are likelier to feel confident enough to begin to relax and trust more in the flow of things. Then the possibility arises to demonstrate a spiritual lightness of being by a rising above the lower self. This hints at our exalted station, speaks of the soul's essential freedom, and is akin to the cheering effect of sunlight.

Spirit is, by nature, free. Therefore each of us has somehow to come to terms with the need to find balance between two awesome forces – spiritual liberation and worldly involvement. Too much in one direction and we would float on the surface of life and experience superficiality; in the other direction, seeking too much external stability, we would find the result to be stagnation of spirit.

There is a test of relevance. So much of what seems superficial and trivial is indeed truly trivial and should be ignored if we are to avoid wastage of our own precious life force through careless diffusion. What is and what is not perceived as trivial remains at the discretion of the individual.

TAURUS 21 – 25

AUTHORITY

In trying to confirm that we have realized our desires, the emotional journey is one where we seek signs both from sacred cultural teaching and from natural phenomena. We learn to make the very best of what we were born with and how to access deep reserves of survival-level passion when we feel seriously threatened. The sense of belonging to a community and enjoying its amenities is further evidence that we are valued and so confirms that we have value.

The right to shape reality is automatically conferred upon those who are able to tune into the wisdom of old – to understand the established operating processes of real life. Anyone with the acuity to read signs and interpret symbols meaningfully will know enough of the racial memory to influence the race. The old is thus honoured and preserved by those who, by taking on a conservative role, keep alive that which still has merit.

We slow down our passage into the future, avoiding a helter-skelter recklessness, by drawing attention to the impeccable beauty and enduring value in our heritage. Thus authority takes on the dignity accorded to an elder and this is no small matter. The power of command depends upon an atmosphere of gravitas backed up with all the symbols of position. By such means one takes on the crucial social responsibility of stewardship that binds the community into expressing proven group values and building lasting group projects.

TAURUS 21

A FINGER POINTING IN AN OPEN BOOK

(CONFIRMATION):

RUDHYAR: A FINGER POINTING TO A LINE IN AN OPEN BOOK

GUIDANCE IN BOOKS

A balance must be found between receiving guidance and self-determination of wisdom

Seeking guidance, it is sometimes helpful to use the oracular function of sacred texts by opening such a book at random for example, and intuitively discovering personal meaning in a line. Taken too far, this can create an over-dependence and diminish self-reliance so that personal will and freedom of choice are inappropriately sacrificed.

We need values and goals in order to determine truth from fancy

A book that records some small part of our racial wisdom is ineffective except to the extent that it is read, and understood, by a contemporary student seeking to confirm and develop their own ideas.

The power of the human mind needs to be held in focus to be creative and useful. It is by pursuing our purposes and interests that we can pull the attention to a sharp point.

By this process, we hone our insights and become empowered to reach out into the world of events and phenomena. We learn to shape them and so find our own way to delve into life's unexplored potentials.

We need values and goals in order to determine truth from fancy. What doesn't work for us doesn't work, so we reject it. We are thus made capable of a fine power of discrimination.

Each complete rearrangement of human affairs has its own significance, and we yearn to penetrate its meaning on an entirely personal level. Concepts and theory are the dry speculations of philosophies, yet all of us want to validate wisdom in the context of our own worldly reality.

We are bound to adjust the hypotheses of others to be in accordance with our own experiences. If wisdom teachings do not fit usefully – to help us live normal lives – then we will find our own particular way to rectify them to suit our special purposes.

Otherwise, through blind obedience to the written word, we become automatons enslaved by the persuasions of those who have the will and confidence to proclaim and pontificate.

TAURUS 22

WHITE DOVE OVER TROUBLED WATERS

(GUIDANCE)

RUDHYAR: WHITE DOVE FLYING OVER TROUBLED WATERS

GUIDANCE IN NATURE

Nature will always produce some symbolic message for those who can read the signs

By contrast to books, there are sometimes signs. These, arising out of larger life rhythms, are more indicative of the greater picture, the cultural vibration as contrasted to the individual. Since our emotional upsets are much more the product of interaction with others than they are personal ambiguities we are better advised to seek guidance from the signs all around us than simply consulting our own wisdom.

The mind is shaped and strengthened through guidance

In Sufism, the white dove is symbolic of Holy Spirit. There is a part of us, deep and abiding, that resonates with this image. It is this part of us that can be identified as the Guide. If we find an external version of this feeling, then we are directed towards a person for instruction, otherwise we are drawn to stimulate this sense of perfection on a deeper more personal inner level through situations, people and ideas.

Two contradictory core beliefs exist within the minds of people. Some see danger and scarcity, fear predators, and expect trouble. Others trust that there is always a way out, a choice to rise above it all and enjoy. On a very practical level, the positive attitude is safer, in fact, safe – and yet some of us need to be guided towards this belief.

The default condition in life, freely given and ever available, is the understanding of this wisdom. We would actually have to do work, and creatively insist on pessimism, in order to attract bad luck. In other words, relaxing is a very positive life strategy.

An unencumbered mind is creative, effective and optimistic – but it can produce some very unpleasant circumstances if it is allowed to gather dirt and dust around itself, by habitual thinking, woolly or detrimental thoughts.

Mind is by nature flighty and easily seduced; it needs to be shaped and strengthened through guidance. When we have clear reasons, well-defined purposes, and meaningful thinking processes, then we become skilful in reconciling our difficulties in life.

We are born of spirit. As a direct result of this, we have an indwelling orientation towards the re-enactment of divine heritage. The heart knows how to pull us towards the essential pole of our sacred centre.

The beauty is that this all happens whether we want it to or not – automatically. As long as we do not actively steer away from it, we will always be somehow guided towards the true and deep centre of our sacred self.

TAURUS 23

JEWELLERY SHOP

(PRESERVATION)

RUDHYAR: A JEWELLERY SHOP FILLED WITH VALUABLE GEMS

IMPROVING UPON NATURE

Crafting precious things gives evidence of a profound symbiotic relationship with Nature

Our life path moves us irrevocably though circuitously towards greater and greater demonstrations of personal excellence. This arises through the twin processes of becoming increasingly aware of our given potential and the refining of that raw material into even more impressive shining facets.

We preserve what has importance with tokens – to bestow durability upon the ephemeral

Whatever is going on for us psychologically is given physical form in the immediate circumstances of our lives. In fact nothing else is. What we see happening around us is who we are. We must not get confused about which aspect of this is cause and which is effect – we are the cause; the effect is the outer reality.

We determine what we value in our everyday lives, to the level of preservation and cherishment, according to the value within ourselves. A writer will treasure a piece of their succinct, inspiring prose, a traveller will have photos of places, and a mother will love her children. Typically what we most appreciate is a reflection and measure of the effort expended in our achievements.

These tokens of effort give durability to what otherwise would be painfully ephemeral. We want to preserve what has been important to us – and a jewellery shop very often helps us to do this.

It is the glory of this world that it has the capacity to reproduce an unlimited kaleidoscopic range of phenomena to illustrate, through physical embodiment, what is going on in our minds. So we always tend to seek out that which can shape our vision within a larger dimension.

It is useful sometimes to project a clear strong statement of worthiness into our community – "*I can afford gold, take me seriously*!" The inclination we have to direct our aspirations towards non-trivial expression is in line with our sense of self as worthwhile, and somehow a seeding of something eternally valid and consistent.

Naturally this healthy and growthful experience is subject to distortion if its subtlety is lost – so we must remember that the abuse of this principle will have unwanted consequences. Greediness betrays the soul in its quest for false gold; fame and fortune are poor substitutes for a sense of one's spiritual wellbeing.

Luxury can be evidence of great success as we develop skills and character. Our joyful experience of abundance comes as we participate in fair rewards for our integrity – the alignment of body and soul in the pursuit of meaning and happiness.

TAURUS 24

A MOUNTED INDIAN WITH SCALP LOCKS

(COMMAND)

RUDHYAR: AN INDIAN WARRIOR RIDING FIERCELY, HUMAN SCALPS HANGING FROM HIS BELT

SURVIVAL INSTINCT

During early stages of development, it is crucial to establish identity of self and tribe

One side of human nature that needs to be channelled properly instead of being denied is the natural aggressiveness and potential for violence that can arise when survival is in doubt. Those who are foreign to each other are often fearful and feel threatened by the other; it is a fact of life that must be faced. It is not at all unusual for this to spill over into competitiveness within own's own tribe.

Conquest of the lower self leads to mastery and the power of command

The power of command is a quality of great worth and found in only a few exceptional people. Often such people take a pride in their appearance as a tool to convey this quality – although in the modern Western culture it is more likely to be an expensive suit than scalp locks.

There are other personal attributes that support command, and these include the power of attention. At the highest levels of attainment, senses are honed and brought to the full service of an individual's aspirations and ambition.

Taking a position of leadership in no way removes the possibility of heart empathy – but there is a temptation often to ride roughshod over the feelings of others, and even behave ruthlessly with complete inhumanity.

The lesser person will be content to achieve conquest over an enemy – even enjoying the momentary supremacy – while the master will develop an unimpeachable conquest of the lower self, through a life path of constant discipline and self-control.

What arises as a direct result of such self-discipline is the facility to discipline others. Indeed, the ability to take a measure of control over both Nature and the future can actually unfold. Exceptional authority is the result.

In less dramatic terms, in ordinary life, we find ourselves pushed and pulled by external forces – social and physical. To deal with them satisfactorily and take command of our life requires discipline.

The greater our power of self-control, the luckier we seem to get. It is not luck in fact – it is simply the echo of the work we have done on ourselves. Rewards come in the form of both material acquisition and development of spiritual qualities.

TAURUS 25

A LARGE WELL-KEPT PUBLIC PARK

(RECREATION)

RUDHYAR: A VAST PUBLIC PARK

COLLECTIVE WORKS

Belonging to a tribe or community involves us in working together toward shared goals

A community in harmony will act together to create communal works that allow individuals to enjoy greater levels of abundance and comfort. It is a strong motivation to seek ways to live in peace and put aside fear, competition and aggressiveness.

Communal experiences help us to discover our individual skills and characteristics

In order to create and maintain resources on a community level, there needs to be a body corporate, like a council, whose mandate is to put collective issues above the personal in importance.

There is no need to surrender our uniqueness of personality and accept imposed communal judgements about what is good and true – that would tend to trivialise our lives. However we surely can see how there is great merit in the devotion of time and effort to assist the practical welfare of people collectively – for example in keeping a park.

Then we can all use resources that are only feasible for a community to afford, so each member has a higher degree of self-enjoyment as a direct result of this spirit of collective collaboration.

The economic and practical benefits are obvious, yet there is more at stake here. Potentially there is a transformative personal gain for each person who takes on a special role in such a project. The division of labour will never be equal, and this could well become an area of conflict that needs skilful handling and a high degree of integrity. Positions of public importance, from council secretary to president of the country, very often attract enmity.

The essential point made here is the emphasis on common experiences of humanity as the setting for an individual to discover their own special skills and characteristics, with particular focus on recreation as an appropriate application of available resources.

In isolation, we could never fulfil our wants and needs – we need interactivity with others to provide the grit that stimulates the development of a very wide range of personal attributes. Recreation is an aspect of collaborative activity that can offer sufficient grit without a very high risk of serious conflict.

It is further implied that self-discovery and self-realisation come about as incidental fruit of such interactions. It is generally more productive to approach such work rather playfully as a recreation and without any specific intention of self-improvement. Often we later realise that we have gained hidden benefits, and these inevitably include an aspect of our personal evolutionary process.

TAURUS 26 – 30

DEPTH

As individuals we seek to confirm our worth by taking on a social role until eventually in our own field we come to represent our tradition. En route, we may well need new beginnings in order to bring new understandings until we have learned through the mature wisdom of seeing both sides of all issues. At last we have the possibility of claiming what we desire and we show our success both to the community and on behalf of the community.

Following on from our mastery of material management, it is good to seek the inner peace that enables us to listen to the soul's quiet voice. Outer realities are given minimal attention as our focus turns within, to attend more sincerely to inner knowledge. There is a shift in perspective where time appears slower, age is appreciated more than youth, and experience more than prospect. Gentle cooperative involvement, both with natural forces and other people, is the natural fruit of such a sense of inner stillness.

The eternal promise of life is revealed. Why compete? Why even strain over much? Things need to be carefully weighed up – perhaps the status quo has its own value, so why move to change anything at all? Knowing already that we can move mountains, the test is to learn how to feel whether they actually need moving. Let superficial shows of aspirations have their place then – all is illusion, all is hoax – and despite all the comings and goings, successes and failures, nothing essential ever really changes. Perhaps, on the deepest level, all is unfolding just as it should.

TAURUS 26

A SPANIARD SERENADING HIS SENORITA

(CONSTANCY)

RUDHYAR: A SPANISH GALLANT SERENADES HIS BELOVED

ACTING APPROPRIATELY

Personal desires are acted out according to the permitted roles that our culture lays down

Having established our place in the community partly by doing what others do, we can then further our individual expression of self. We may look to do this through available social methods - in sport, clubs and music for example - and finding various roles by which to evolve our lives, often employing glamour as an expedient.

As we speak, so we are

The skilled individual may have 'kissed the blarney stone' and be able to add wit and humour to flattery in order to control others with the smooth talk of a silver tongue. Yet the wiser individual will see the futility in this misuse of glamour.

The reality we encounter is built by what we think, say and do – and every little contribution matters. A casual remark here, a white lie there…what does it matter? Well it does matter. Each nuance of what we allow out has its subtle effect – it materialises.

Those of us given to poetry and music are asked to honour these powerful devices as they create their effects. Through constancy we can become the embodiment of the ideals that romance points towards. If the soul exults in the beauty of love's language, then we must be true to that feeling, or we will betray it as do prostitutes and gigolos.

As we speak, so we are. What comes out of our mouths is a measure of what comes out of our hearts. If our hearts are to be true, then what we say must be true.

Also, we need to remember that the vision we are projecting into the world's future is not only that which pleases our own desire – it is greater than that because others also participate in its creation.

If our soul is to be undeniably present within our created vision, then so must others' souls. This requires a kind of courtship – soul needs to be reassured, coaxed, serenaded, and won. To achieve this insincerely is a betrayal at the level of soul – and it is difficult to think of a more poignant crime.

With constancy, we learn that everything is at hand – that all we desire is already ours, and that no sense of the need for compromise is truly valid.

TAURUS 27

OLD NATIVE WOMAN SELLING BEADS

(DETACHMENT)

RUDHYAR: AN OLD INDIAN WOMAN SELLING THE ARTEFACTS OF HER TRIBE TO PASSERS-BY

GRACEFUL AGEING

As youth fades we are less assertive, more willing to adapt to collective ways and needs

In time the role-playing sheds its glamour and the glitter and shine are replaced by a depth of beauty and peaceful joy. With age we become aspects of the culture, representatives of our tradition and holders of its deepest wisdom.

The soul is indifferent to circumstances and scenarios

Whatever life throws up as a challenge or temptation, a person who is anchored to an inner sense of self will always ring true and remain dignified and calm, little troubled by outer circumstances.

An old woman scratching a living at the roadside is an image associated with squalor and poverty – yet these are only the outer conditions of her life, and say nothing of the depth of richness experienced within.

This inner wealth is a cornucopia of gifts, and a person who draws on these hidden reserves of skill is paying tribute to what is the heritage – the soul – of their culture. We can see the beads now as having a much deeper meaning, they are more than demonstrations of dexterity; they contain a poignant record of times gone by, connecting us to a past upon which today's reality, and our resourcefulness, have their foundation.

Humanity has an astonishing ability to respond to any situation, however squalid, and find a way to express joy and creativity within it. One who has this realisation will move from one thing to another with no attachment to anything permanent – since anyway nothing is permanent – and no attachment to positions of importance, since nothing external has importance to the soul.

However, we need to avoid being stuck in the distorted interpretation that 'nothing matters so life is sterile'. This leads to isolation and the self-fulfilling outcome of unfruitfulness. The fruits of one's abilities may well be inconsequential, yet without them, the talents that produce them cannot be developed, and these are the true treasures. The beads are near worthless; the skill is priceless.

Detachment is a state of grace; it does not preclude full, sensitive participation in the affairs of others, but allows for that to be without agenda – having no intention to exert unasked-for influence. Described as *'being in the world but not of the world'* – it is a strange idea to many Westerners, yet well-understood in India and the Middle East. We see that we are simply witnessing a mirror image of inner hidden processes, which we find engaging and worthy of constant review. Such a review function cannot operate when we get too involved, so we downplay the importance of things and circumstances. We can then release any attachment to public opinion and material security in order to turn within, to seek ancient and intuitive wisdom.

The soul is impervious to the needs of the personality and seeks to be neither rich nor poor, neither loved nor despised, neither respected nor disdained. These are petty irrelevances that threaten to distract from the true purpose of the inner self, which is to experience its authentic self as fully as possible.

TAURUS 28

WOMAN PURSUED BY MATURE ROMANCE

(PERSUASION)

RUDHYAR: A WOMAN, PAST HER 'CHANGE OF LIFE' EXPERIENCES A NEW LOVE

NEW BEGINNINGS

Limits of the physical body need not stop us from new possibilities and opportunities

The sense of a time-based linear degrading of capacity is refuted. We do not need to 'grow old and die off' but instead always have the capacity to find a new beginning. For example, we can fall in love even when this is driven mostly by the heart's joy in sharing rather than sexuality and procreation.

We do not avoid disappointment by denying life but by trusting in faith

It is useful to consider the journey of the incarnated self as an aspect of the soul's journey through eternity. The rigours of physicality forbid the survival of casual preferences, and demand that only truly enduring qualities are examined in depth. Eventually all potentials will be realised – because life is ageless and endless – however this pruning process facilitates timely optimisation of the soul's most important current priorities.

By identifying fully with all eventualities, we can come to understand that external events are simply expressions of conscious and unconscious personal choices, rather than enforced limitations.

The feeling state of appreciation, a most joyous and sought-after experience, is heightened when this pruning process has reached a certain level of maturity. With fewer distractions and less confusion, the more mature individual can focus and project more of the soul's deepest qualities. This, of course, attracts the external situations that express these qualities in irrefutable clarity of form.

Motivation is of great importance. Whereas imagination is indeed a prerequisite for life optimisation – it is not enough; it is a necessary but not sufficient condition. Without motivation insufficient will is awakened to project imagination into substance. Rewards then fall short of expectation.

Expectation itself is an inherently-arising condition of the human spirit. We, as a species are imbued with hope. Even after previous disappointments, we can be persuaded into romance.

Disappointment is to be avoided; it is demoralising and robs us of will. This lack of will brings further disappointment and begins a downward spiral. The trick is not to take any deprivation as final. The struggle between the soul's priorities and the ego's propensities is that which drives the life of a progressive person. Such a person always returns to the light after fact-finding sojourns into the darkness. This is the only means by which maturity can develop. We may well be light-beings, whose instincts ever draw us home, yet we are entirely fascinated by the glamour and romance of the darkness. Long may it be so! Without this, there is no driving force to propel life vigorously.

In a false understanding of modesty, which is so often an excuse to hide the real problem of under-stimulated will, we are in danger of settling for less. We must not lose heart; we must refuse the lesser with a confident expectation that the greater is at hand. So it is not by denying life that we avoid disappointment, it is by trusting in faith.

TAURUS 29

TWO COBBLERS WORKING AT A TABLE

(CAPABILITY)

RUDHYAR: TWO COBBLERS WORKING AT A TABLE

SEEING BOTH POINTS OF VIEW

Understanding someone else's way requires objectivity about our own opinions

Mature understanding arises out of seeing the other point of view, and the deepening of wisdom moves towards having less staunch opinions on matters. New experiences test our maturity of wisdom; do we react in a knee-jerk manner and take up a posture, or can we work collaboratively with another to deepen our knowledge?

To optimise our own achievements and joy, we need the wisdom of others

At one level of interpretation, two old men are puttering away their lives on tasks that lack personal meaning or life satisfaction. And indeed many people engage in jobs to pay the rent rather than to fulfil personal dreams. This can so easily lead to a very grim attitude and a grey heart.

Yet looking beneath the surface of the task of shoe mending, we can see the need for a keen eye and a sharp intelligence applied to a very specific outcome. The two men are in a working relationship, one that requires a very particular form of reliable communication so that they operate effectively together as a team.

Each has their own talents and preferences that blends with the other so that a harmony is achieved and the whole becomes more than the sum of the parts. Individually they would be far less impactful than they are as co-workers.

The artisan and workman have a unique and highly respected quality of integrity that is derived by their simple and absolute commitment to performing skilfully the task at hand. This is done by balancing the pros and cons accurately for each of the many aspects of the job – customer liaison, assessment of damage, cost benefit calculation, knowledge of materials, methods, and so on.

Taking this metaphor into our normal lives, we see that we gain much if we become capable of calling upon the general assistance of others when we have complex challenges to deal with. To harness the power of a division of labour requires particular, and highly important, attitudes, talents and social skills.

We need the wisdom of others, and so we need to learn how to facilitate sharing, in order to optimise our achievements and joy. This is because we are all connected and each an aspect of each other. Neither achievement nor joy is meaningful or even possible without the sharing of it.

We can make the world our own – not only by developing our own capabilities but by learning how to enjoy those of others too. Self-knowledge is the key to unlock all the secrets of how to live. And we only come to know who we ourselves are by coming to know the depth and subtlety of other people.

TAURUS 30

PEACOCK PARADING ON AN ANCIENT LAWN

(ALOOFNESS)

RUDHYAR: PEACOCK PARADING ON THE TERRACE OF AN OLD CASTLE

THE END RESULT

Our personal displays of excellence bears testimony to all that went before us

Individuality seeks both maturity of understanding and full substantiation of worth - wisdom and wealth. Gifts inherited and improved upon are shown to be in part the flowering of cultural aspirations and its pride and joy.

Seek answers from within against popular opinion if necessary

The ancient lawn in the image symbolises racial heritage and history; the peacock's display is contextualised by this background. From this, we remember that we can only illustrate our special qualities in contrast to the status quo. Our defiant strutting actually dignifies what went before – by selecting specific old ways and wisdoms as chosen markers against which to push.

It is helpful to externalise the doubts and deficiencies in our self-understanding. We must make choices about exactly what to parade in public, and this tells us a lot about what we aspire to be. We get information from this, which helps us to refine our general approach to life. We learn to see criticism as clues, through which to find balance between what we want of society, and what society wants of us.

Consciously or not, we are ever struggling to develop our own, highly personalised, set of inner values. We do this by examining our aspirations against eternal values, partly discovered by those who went before us, and encapsulated as laws and morals. Others have struggled to find their truth before us; we walk a well-trod path.

Too much self-contemplation can be as damaging as too little, and eventually can become unrewarding. However, it is highly beneficial occasionally to turn within, and bring the mind to a state of repose. This allows us to validate our world-view on the level of meditative thought, and feeling.

The striving for outer ornament is a tool by which we emulate those whom we admire. We can raise ourselves momentarily to a higher station by the 'fake it 'til you make it' principle, which is very useful because it stimulates both the desire for, and the knowledge of, our idealised potential.

By remaining aloof, we diminish the influence of others' opinions and atmospheres, and this underlines our willingness to seek answers from within.

Sadly, despite our deepest yearnings, we will never be completely understood. Our values will never be totally aligned with another, and eventually we are left alone to uncover the deepest aspects.

GEMINI 1 – 5

APPETITE

Our first desire impulse has been confirmed - we exist and have a place to be - and now we find ourselves drawn into further discoveries by the compelling force of curiosity and exploration. Perceptions bubbling up from the unconscious mind, and visions of higher beings and states popping into our imagination, must be held in check by training our thoughts into reason and reasonableness. Yet we are of the Earth and resonate on a deep level with its old secrets, and we are of the heavens too and are compelled to seek freedom from the very forms that offer stability and security through limitation. The mind is mercurial and cannot fail to move about - continually sharing its attention between the various realms of consciousness.

To the adventurous, life is the experience of adventure; to the playful, all things are toys. If we live with the same open-eyed joyfulness, which normally we associate with children, then all material pleasure can be fully and unashamedly appreciated, and every opportunity grasped – we are hungry to find ways to enhance the enjoyment and beauty in each and every detail of our circumstances, delighting in the process. This custom expresses an appetite for living, and keeps us thoroughly invested in the evolutionary advancements of self and community. Life throws up any number of available experiences, each of which has its own attraction and validity, and can be considered a meaningful adventure to the curious-minded. There is always a risk with adventure, and yet a far greater one without it – the danger of stagnation.

GEMINI 1

A GLASS BOTTOMED BOAT IN STILL WATER

(CURIOSITY)

RUDHYAR: A GLASS BOTTOMED BOAT REVEALS UNDERSEA WONDERS

DISCOVERING NEW DIMENSIONS

The unconscious mind holds as many secrets as the ocean, revealed to one who enquires

There exist vast oceans of reality of which we remain almost entirely unconscious and yet can sometimes glimpse with peripheral or dimmed vision. To the curious this fist foggy awareness triggers excitement and wonder, and even a hint that we could get closer if we surrendered the safety of our secure little ego.

Inquisitiveness keeps us prepared for the unannounced calls of fate

At times, when not subject to the pressure of wants and needs, we are moved in certain ways to take definite creative action on our own account.

One pressing call to action is curiosity – we tend to be strongly drawn to keep abreast of what is around us. What may well have originated as an important survival strategy has evolved into a willing readiness to maintain touch with the stream of everyday and seemingly inconsequential affairs.

The glass bottomed boat has been made by a person who wants to look deeper into things, below the surface. By this they ensure that they are alert to each and every ramification of experience.

The summon of our destiny is rarely a bugle or fanfare; it is often a low, unannounced whisper. Each moment has its particular unique qualities and potentialities, which would escape the notice of a less active observer, yet will contain subtle clues to the revelation of new openings.

Alert curiosity makes it becomes possible to notice what comes along, and capitalise fully upon it – with the knowledge that all it takes to find opportunity is to look for it. We grasp fortune unreservedly and take full advantage of unexpected potentials of the moment in hand. Indecisiveness – an inability to strike quick and true – is poor excuse for a life half-lived.

Yet some of these occurrences are really of no concern to us and we are well advised to hold a position of poise. Anyway, simply observing with an objective inactivity has real value.

Potency begets more potency – success breeds success and optimism is the seed whose fruit is inevitably joy. So the formula for a rich and interesting life journey is to strike out wherever we see possibilities to claim a greater degree of experience and knowledge.

GEMINI 2

SANTA CLAUS FILLING STOCKINGS FURTIVELY

(PRODIGALITY)

RUDHYAR: SANTA CLAUS FURTIVELY FILLING STOCKINGS HANGING IN FRONT OF THE FIREPLACE

SPIRITUAL BLESSINGS

A childlike openness to the possibility of wonders brings unexpected magical gifts

Our barely-perceived touch with the unconscious side of self is matched by the other, super-conscious, side of self, which is accessed by faith, purity and an innocent heart - one that still believes in a benign and generous father figure. As long as we do not look too closely or with any cynicism the spiritual realms offer comfort and blessings without explanations.

Appreciation and abundance keep alive a community's awareness of spiritual values

Santa Claus is a symbol that engenders the feeling of thankfulness with an appropriate blend of family, humour, childlike simplicity and – because of its timing – a touch of sacredness.

Having lived for 2000 years under the auspices of Christian teachings, many Westerners have ambiguity about the relationship between their spiritual and their material aspirations. The natural joy that is felt when taking pleasure from worldly goods can be marred by distorted religious teachings.

Every day there are rewards to be had for no other reason than it suits us individually to enjoy whatever we can. Those who are not poor eat as much for pleasure as for need.

It is very helpful indeed, on a spiritual level, to practice appreciation, because it opens the heart centre, which both generates a warm feeling of love, and attracts abundance. If we forget to do this daily – well then, at least once a year we are reminded.

It is a little sad that the taking of pleasure is so often done furtively. This is seen in other areas such as sexuality and celebration of success, and indicates the power of the dark forces within religion to deny our natural feelings. It can lead to a sense of futility because it sets up an inner contrariness of purpose – where we have desire for something that we believe is disallowed because we were persuaded that it should be.

Christmas may seem too crass to honour Christ. Yet the ritualisation of generosity, of family connectedness and the licence to behave more openly are all worthy – these qualities are not the sublime essence of the teachings of Christ, but they do not contradict them. At least it keeps some of the community's spiritual values alive.

Also, on another level, the ritual is a powerful programming process to train us from an early age to expect abundance, even prodigality. The expectation of surplus is not only a survival technique but also a profound spiritual teaching. We tend to be materialistic, even possessive, and Christmas brings this attribute of ours to a positive, more conscious expression.

GEMINI 3

THE GARDEN OF THE TUILERIES

(LUXURY)

RUDHYAR: THE GARDEN OF THE TUILERIES IN PARIS

CRYSTALLISATION

Bringing the rational mind to explain the mysteries solidifies experience into knowledge

Even though we can touch the depths of unconsciousness and heights of super-consciousness by temporarily suspending the mind's devotion to reason this cannot last indefinitely. Sooner or later the grasping mind must structure its perceptions, and create patterns to explain them. This is form, thought-form, and it gives rise to rulership and rituals as it centralises the ego into the discipline of clarity.

Authority is given to those who can achieve

Parisians met, promenaded, celebrated and relaxed in this luxurious garden of the Renaissance period. They were seen as selfish, lording it over others. In England, so much of the national architectural heritage was kept alive by aristocrats and fabulously wealthy families, very often at the expense of the underprivileged. There is here an unpopular wisdom – certain types of people create, maintain and enjoy wealth and other types serve them.

It may seem to some that we are constrained by accident of birth to suffer lack of opportunity. Yet this interpretation of reality never promotes happiness. It is for each of us to bring our own capabilities and possibilities to a graceful, exquisite level of self-expression within our own world. Happiness does not relate to wealth – it arises out of making the best of what we have, and most assuredly is not given automatically to the rich.

In general, at all levels of society, people expect to enjoy the results of their work and their faithful commitment to what they value. We develop social position and wealth in the context of our community by demonstrating an appetite for preserving and caring for that which we have – whether in a palace or a mean cottage. It is this that brings us the fullest degree of satisfaction in life.

This is made evident by the universal practice of rewarding achievement with tokens of social approval. We may perhaps say '*well done'* to someone who tried really hard – but the prise still goes to the winner.

Authority is a prerequisite for the smooth operation of any community, and it is given to those who can achieve. Thus it closely relates to self-confidence and the outer evidence of that – in material tokens and rewards of ability.

The exaltation of success in material benefits may well be criticised by the have-nots, yet it is an enduring practice throughout humanity's history – and is even studied in the animal kingdom. A male showing off its energy-expensive rich and colourful qualities demonstrates to a potential mate his capacity to provide for her offspring.

Besides, in a community there must be a stable system of values and rewards, otherwise an individual would never, and could never, aspire towards optimal self-enhancement.

GEMINI 4

HOLLY AND MISTLETOE

(RITUALISATION)

RUDHYAR: HOLLY AND MISTLETOE REAWAKEN OLD MEMORIES OF CHRISTMAS

PRIMITIVE ROOTS

Pagan practices of spirituality bind us into the Source of all knowledge

Clarity, explanations, rationality and reasonableness of ego-centred justifications are the concomitants of civilised society and adult norms of acceptable attitudes. Yet beneath the surface we long for something we know is lost or forgotten, something more real, closer to Nature and pagan mysteries and, even though these darker forces hint that something dangerous lurks, we are attracted.

Rituals renew our initiatives

Holly and mistletoe are used decoratively at Christmas to mark the cycle of life, and give greater strength to the binding power of ritual. If we lose sight of our personal freedom of initiative, or lack the will to assert our own unique path, then with these rituals we become supported by society and our close associations.

Rituals can relate to the seasons, or daily rhythms, and they need not always be profound or universal; they can be empty of meaning or pregnant with potential – the difference has to do with our approach. Do we expect them to feel supportive, or constraining? Whatever the expectations, we are free to create our own personalities and situations, as well as our own rituals – in fact there is no end to the subtle encouragement we receive from every direction to express ourselves fully and expansively. This is because life is ever accommodating towards those who reach out with a specific course of action. Resources are always there – so too is the stimulus we may need to energise our imagination.

There are countless opportunities for us to try out new experiences. Each of them allows us to establish how our inner, subjective world-view can be substantiated with dignity, even within the outer world that is shaped by society and its customs.

If we choose to align with society, then its traditions support us; if not then they do not – they test us as to whether our actions and attitudes are worth the price of disapproval.

Life throws up new versions of the eternal kaleidoscope – in cyclical manifestations of our range of choices – and, on some level, it is irrelevant which option we take of the many available.

By responding quickly to each choice, life can superficially get very rich. Yet it is the inner aspect of experience that bestows meaning. With a vibrant sense of sharing our own special magic, we can participate fully in any and every moment and each event. Through this, we experience perpetual inner self-renewal, and the deepening of meaning.

However, it takes a degree of composure and truthful self-awareness, to resist the temptation to indulge an obsession with the superficial. We perhaps need to make sure we are not mistaking fool's gold for the real thing, for example by enjoying the celebration of seasonal rituals without learning about their source and symbolic purpose. Holly and mistletoe are pagan mysteries not Christian.

GEMINI 5

A RADICAL MAGAZINE

(TANGENCY)

RUDHYAR: A REVOLUTIONARY MAGAZINE ASKING FOR ACTION

GOING BEYOND ESTABLISHED LIMITS

Discovery leads to an unwillingness to accept the status quo

Any sustained push in one direction must inevitably trigger a push-back of equal intensity; such is life at root. However much the powers of civilized authority require conformity, there will always be those who choose at whatever cost to reach beyond the boundaries to discover what lies there. Almost by definition these are the law-breakers, the marginals and the weirdos, who tend to be feared, ridiculed and scapegoated.

Through tangential touch, we link to everything else

Personality effectively puts its stamp on everything it touches, even if the touch is merely tangential. This is because personality is a co-created form, a characteristic of relating, and is shaped as it shapes.

A radical magazine touches our world with opinion and information about things right at the very edge of our awareness. Through such processes, we are linked to all and everything, and even the most subtle and hidden potentialities of our lives are introduced as real and functional aspects of our experience.

We are often tempted to quarrel belligerently with those whose world view is radically different from our own. This is perverse behaviour and is unhelpful, particularly if it does not sponsor the raising of awareness.

It is for us to come to terms with others who share very little of our perceptions and issues. Even if there is some confrontation, eventually a settled position must be reached.

On occasion, the introduction of new ideas is entirely necessary to stir us at the deepest level in order to raise something important in our lives to a high degree of self-expression.

The principal under review is finding an appropriate balance between inner and outer compulsions, with a clear sense that whatever stirs us deeply in our feelings has special worth in defining who we are.

It's worth remembering that change is the essence of all existence, so it is necessary for us to allow a significant element of adjustment and evolution in our interactions. This requires us to be exposed to viewpoints that challenge at root the status quo, and threaten our easy composure.

GEMINI 6 – 10

FRESHNESS

The inevitable result of stretching out to discover who we are and what we can do includes examination of capacity and trials of strength. We are not only challenged to discover what our assertive power can achieve but also whether we can turn it off and trust - because if it goes too far then disharmony will be the certain result. We come to see that the true test of mastery is to apply the mind to conquer the lower self and take control of rampant urges.

Each of us has a particular background of information and wisdom that makes us lean towards our own sense of what best serves us and others. Building on these past influences, we offer ourselves to every new situation, and contribute creatively and fully in the overall wellbeing of our community, by bringing freshness of perspective. The very differences between us all, of specialised activities and personal enthusiasms, are the components of a collective network of continual cooperation – and the commonality of skills, opinions, language and background, are the building blocks of this network. These exchanges create clear guidelines for individual members to establish the all-important connection upon which a community has its foundation.

A deep level of empathy and intuition unfolds as a direct result of the great multiplicity of seemingly trivial interactions, and this creates the sympathetic fellowship of souls that is our wider community. So, it is imperative that each is allowed full opportunity to participate in an exchange of views, and open up new facets of personal expression. Only in this way can we expand the sense of self into true spiritual fellowship within the community, each taking full advantage of this extraordinary intersection of purposes.

GEMINI 6

DRILLING FOR OIL

(SPECULATION)

RUDHYAR: WORKMEN DRILLING FOR OIL

ZEALOUS APPETITE

Questing for knowledge takes us into emotional process and uncovering of dark secrets

In the same way that some people are greedy for wealth and power, others seek to penetrate deep into the hidden realms in pursuit of knowledge. Whereas material trappings of success are the most popular goals, a more awakened soul knows that knowledge is a higher achievement. Gemini is as interested in delving deep into the dark unknown realms of the unconscious (oil) as they are to pursue the higher wisdom of spirit (refining).

Progress is about taking risks as we follow our urges to enrich our experience of life

Drilling for oil requires a great degree of specialisation by which we concentrate our sense of self-motivation single-pointedly.

We are motivated by the wish to broaden our reach and availability of resources. Yet perhaps we are going too far in areas of self-exploitation – it is speculative; it carries risk.

We are naturally inclined to endow each and every life experience to the fullest extent. We seek to optimise our wealth – including wealth of experience – and this is not a safe process, nor without core-level challenges to our sense of self and self-worth.

The pursuit of this life direction, as with any other, can stimulate us to evolve an indomitable strength of effort. It is no easy task to exploit the earth's hidden wealth and requires us to dig no less deeply into our selves. The outer effort clearly reflects the inner.

We never really know what to expect. We have clear hopes for this enterprise to reveal its abundance and repay our efforts – but typically, as we pursue uncertain objectives, we have to be open to the revelation of new dimensions of life and of self, which may or may not fulfil our desires and expectations.

The process itself is the true reward. The utmost depths of potential in character are revealed to us but not without effort and active participation in the furthering of life experience. The participation, not the outcome, is the most rewarding part of this equation.

None of this is available to us unless and until we accept the need for risk. Essentially, personal and species evolution is mainly about speculation.

GEMINI 7

AN OLD FASHIONED WELL

(RECOMPENSE)

RUDHYAR: A WELL WITH BUCKET AND ROPE UNDER THE SHADE OF MAJESTIC TREES

TRUSTING IN LIFE

To those in right relationship with life basic requirements are freely given

Nature's bounty is most clearly evidenced in its supply of simple needs like water, which lies under the feet awaiting our claim, and is frequently replenished from above. In contrast to those who stress and strain towards further attainment, some can accept and trust in life.

We can rely upon Nature to fund all of our impulses

This metaphor is about something that gives and gives and yet is not diminished. This is because Nature replenishes – offers recompense for – whatever is expended. Despite the countless times that people draw upon our resources, we have the capacity to remain who we always are, and to rely upon that through a certainty of being.

We continually enter into exchanges with others – we always have to assimilate something of them in order to relate, and it always costs us energy.

Yet despite drawing in, and giving out, not much really changes – and even on the deepest levels, we are not essentially compromised at all through these interactions. Nature replenishes us no less than it would the old well.

Even the apparently solid ground beneath us is prone to suffer earthquakes – whereas the core identity of self is uncompromisingly faithful to itself. I am always me, and you are always you; ever will it be so. Sometimes what appears trite is in fact profound – and this simple organic integrity of being is such an example. Our very beingness is our most precious and important quality.

The more fully we trust in our indestructability of self, the freer we are to project versions and possibilities into the world. Everything we say, do or think is an aspect of something deeper – as with transient leaves on a tree whose trunk is solid and whose roots are strong. As no leaf can ever be false, so each and every insubstantial and ephemeral personal impulse has purity as its source.

In all our dealings with others – however inept they may be – we can know that we must, and always will, bounce back to re-state our basic life message.

The well is an unimpeachable symbol of life – and yet so are we.

GEMINI 8

AN INDUSTRIAL STRIKE

(PROTEST)

RUDHYAR: AROUSED STRIKERS SURROUND A FACTORY

REVOLT AGAINST INJUSTICE

Whenever the powerful and rich take advantage then rebelliousness is close at hand

Tension arises between the haves and have-nots and is the primary cause of civil unrest. There is a warning here against allowing our material appetites to go too far and create the conditions for revolt. Typically anyone vaingloriously showing off their attainments, whether material, intellectual or whatever, will lose contact with gentle, modest people - and be diminished thereby and find themselves living their lives surrounded only by the ambitious and the envious.

A constant undeviating self-assertiveness is wholesome

It is not only the right – it is the duty – of self to assert itself and refuse to accept life circumstances that require us to squeeze into a lesser role than we feel is justified. We are obliged to protest against oppressors and demand what we deserve.

If the circumstances of life are inadequate to provide scope for our creative expression for the evolution of self, then we need to act in our own interests and change them. Our claim to this freedom is inherent, a birth right, and includes the opportunity to expand the reach of mind.

The constructive reorganisation of situations is essential to our being who we are. Why else would we have values, and sometimes therefore feelings of being undervalued, if we were not free to respond to them actively?

Nor should this be seen as abnormal behaviour. It is a requirement of accomplishment that we cope with change, and whether or not we are the protagonists, change will certainly occur. These changes are directed away from the unacceptable as much as they are towards desired outcomes.

We seek to create life situations wherein personal dignity is celebrated and never repressed by one over another. If dignity were to be denied it would degenerate into the distorted expression of pride, in the ego-centric sense. Nothing of real value comes from this. Therefore the expression of dignity is encouraged, since it leads towards nobility of attitude and visionary outcomes.

In dealing with the inevitable stresses and forces of life, a constant undeviating self-assertiveness is wholesome, and if this takes similar form to vigorous industrial action – then so be it; occasionally it must be so in order to oust oppressors and demand justice and freedom.

Giving way to that which is life-denying or unjust is an unwarranted and unworthy capitulation of the sacredness of self; this is desecration. But when we allow a depth of Spirit to enter our behaviours and decisions, then naturally and easily we disallow such improper self-surrender.

GEMINI 9

A QUIVER FILLED WITH ARROWS

(PREPARATION)

RUDHYAR: A QUIVER FILLED WITH ARROWS

MASTERY OVER SELF

Challenges are tests for us to learn how to focus the mind

Earlier it was found that the need to fight for survival triggered aggressiveness as a normal potential attitude in humanity; now we look at what happens when that attitude goes beyond defense and into attack mode. Conquest. Whether an individual chooses to attempt to conquer Nature, weaker individuals, or their own baser instincts and urges, is a prime indicator of their spiritual station.

To realise our potential wealth, we follow the formula: preparation, practice, power

The archer does not want to spend his arrows, and the encumbrance of carrying them is not for the joy of it. Some aspects of our life are for insurance; we are constrained to make preparations, just in case. We have a right to hold our place, and yet we may need to bring to our service the necessary resources and equipment to claim a position against intrusion.

In the modern world, it is better to equip ourselves with skills rather than weapons and tools. Within the realm of skills, the mind is sovereign ruler by having a quick intelligence and ready alertness to spot where our best interests lie. Training the mind is a sound investment.

Fruits are offered to those who go through the preparation to train and discipline their art to the level of excellence. Material rewards give evidence of the true wealth within – we feel rich when we know how to create abundance through employment of our skills.

We may demand what is reasonable to maintain our physical needs. Our right, to exist free from need or attack, extends even to the level of having and enforcing a legitimate requirement upon others – though landowners and other power-possessors will often try to deny us what Nature allows.

Yet permission and moral rectitude are by no means always sufficient. Sometimes we need to take what is not offered in order to pursue our quite legitimate intentions.

There is danger in this of course. It is not spiritually lawful to bully, nor take more than enough, and enjoy surfeit at the cost of another's insufficiency. Neither is it proper to press our case in the service of another without their petition.

We have a right to defend; we have a right to project. But do we have what it takes to claim those rights? The formula for success in all aspects of life is quite simple and entirely dependable. To realise our potential wealth, we follow the formula: preparation, practice, power. Be not seduced, deceived, overpowered and effectively enslaved by those in positions; be empowered by your appetites and abilities to take what is yours – and do it with a clear conscience.

GEMINI 10

AN AEROPLANE FALLING

(CRISIS)

RUDHYAR: AN AIRPLANE PERFORMING A NOSE DIVE

OVERCOMING PHYSICAL LIMITS

With extraordinary struggle we can develop super-normal abilities

Being able to fly opposes the force of gravity, which defines physicality; being able to overcome fear opposes the power of death to limit our sense of immortality. Some rare people refuse to be subject to any external power, rejecting even death and physical limitation as insurmountable constraints; to them Mind is paramount.

In passion, danger of death does not disturb us

An aeroplane falling is a symbol of being out of control and in great danger. This is similar to the unspoken fear that society propagates in order to dissuade powerful individuals from taking their freedom.

For the true seeker, this propaganda has its worth as an agency through which the self can reorientate its direction. Celtic spirituality honours the stag, the boar and the salmon because they go against the flow. When we are doubtful about our next spiritual step, here is the clue – go against society.

Like the salmon, we must plunge into all experience passionately.

We have to use a crisis to our advantage and re-establish conscious self-control. Following the direction of the herd is not entirely invalid during easy times, but when crisis comes, then if we can, we must take command.

If we are disinclined to lift a finger in an emergency we will be caught up in a rapid collective descent into jeopardy. We must assume that, since we are required to be heroic to survive, then we are in fact heroes in the making.

Some of us have not lost the sense of existential wellness. When in the right state, nothing whatsoever can befall us other than scenarios and situations appropriate for our best interests. We will even find a way to right a falling aircraft, as long as we trust that we can and pull out all the stops.

However, we can courageously choose to disregard the consequences, actual and potential, when we are in right relationship with the soul. Danger of death, and death itself, are not significant disturbances to the realised being.

GEMINI 11 – 15

AUDACITY

To discover new realities, and new ways to be, leads us to a state of mind that is not bound by habit and nostalgia. We really must discard the past if we are able to meet the future with fresh eyes. When we do, we find ourselves capable of unlooked-for influence and unexpected, rather magical, abilities. This is likely to test us as to whether we can remain emotionally centred and willing to seek confirmation that our new perceptions are reasonable.

Seeking richness, of expression and reward, it is mainly through abandon and mental youthfulness that creativity is allowed its fullest, inspired degree of imaginative reach. A combination of intelligent planning and intuitive inventiveness equips Gemini to cope competently with all emergencies, and thereby bestows a near-reckless disregard of normal cautions and an extraordinary level of daring self-confidence. Coupled with sparkling, natural charm, this sign is capable of far-reaching subtle influence.

Invariably freedom must be protected and verified, so if we become the target of exploitation, or the object of an inconsiderate attitude, then audacious self-assertiveness arises. Individuality is a force that will always demand autonomy and behave according to its own sense of relevance – and if not in keeping with accepted ways, then as a voice apart, asserting its own values and views.

GEMINI 11

A NEW PATH OF REALISM IN EXPERIENCE

(IDENTIFICATION)

RUDHYAR: NEWLY OPENED LANDS OFFER THE PIONEER NEW OPPORTUNITIES FOR EXPERIENCE

ADVENTURE

The path to realisation is uncharted territory that calls up new behaviours and attitudes

The idea of Discovery implies new experiences and opportunities. Having an ability to conquer limitations and urges, we are capable of real creativity, making up whatever we choose as does an artist with a blank canvas.

An aware person sets a specific orientation for their day-to-day lives

We are obliged to find a specific orientation for our lives – a path structured by real experiences. We have no choice about this – it is obligatory. Also it is new, in that no one has cut exactly the same path as us; that makes us all pioneers in a way, at least to the extent that we identify fully with the life that has arisen out of choices.

Mostly we are identified by our social role as a homemaker, doctor or clerk for example, but each of us has many roles – friend, pet owner, customer, neighbour – which also shapes who we are. The way in which we participate in life is specified not much by grand visions and ambitions, but mostly by the minutiae of the daily round. Our understanding of the world is garnered from everyday occurrences.

We weigh up the pros and cons – who to be with, what to eat, where to go, how to live – and in this way we both develop and express our set of values and qualities that determine our uniqueness of being.

Sometimes big events or decisions cut the outline shape, like marriage, becoming a parent, career, or studies, yet the polishing and refining occurs moment by moment. Nobody else does it exactly the same way as we do. We therefore find identification by choosing many ways to be who we are, and we do this every day of our lives.

Nor is this a static or even cyclical process – it is directional. In small ways, these details are modified as we inch more closely towards the most enduring persona we have imagined for ourselves. The resources we muster are brought into play as we go forward. We tend to adopt the behaviours and speech patterns of those whom we admire, so we may find ourselves changing from drinking beer to wine or playing Bach instead of the Rolling Stones; we will pick up nuances of expression too – and call the evening meal supper instead of tea or dinner.

Becoming aware of these changing idiosyncrasies of our ordinary life will help us perfect our character. Self-analysis is legitimately seen to be its own reward, and yet there are inevitably more tangible benefits occurring to the self-aware person. Without self-awareness we sink into unconsciousness and the types of behaviour that mirror others and conform to social norms become habits rather than conscious practices. They must be watched carefully otherwise to some degree our uniqueness of identity will be compromised.

The reconciliation is to be achieved between a healthy degree of experimentation – in changing certain aspects of our ways and means – and silly fantasy.

Whereas it is healthy to try out new versions of self, whatever does not allow us to function better in our real experience is unsustainable and false. Therefore we must apply limits to what we do and say, basically asking ourselves, 'truthfully what can we make work in real terms?'.

GEMINI 12

A SLAVE GIRL SAUCILY ASSERTING HERSELF

(GROWTH)

RUDHYAR: A NEGRO GIRL FIGHTS FOR HER INDEPENDENCE IN THE CITY

RELEASING CONDITIONED THOUGHT FORMS

Habits of behaviour and thought are burdens that must be cast off to journey forward

Despite the apparent freedom of choice offered by new opportunities, we certainly find ourselves caught up in patterns that limit our personal expression. These are residual thought-forms, both personal and cultural, that tend to make us do and think what we have become habituated to do and think. To be truly free we must liberate ourselves from these ghosts of the past.

Freedom is expressed in a unique and self-assertive character that rebels against tyranny

It is inherent within us that we are inclined to take personal advantage of any and every experience we meet in life. In this image, a slave girl is trying the patience of her mistress. She has very little power, almost none, and yet she does what she can – what matters here is the spirit of challenge to tyranny.

Healthy individuals have a commitment to the certainty of growth; we expect and demand that our life circumstances generally improve. Any oppressive attempts to restrict this completely will so often lead towards some kind of rebelliousness.

The deeper understanding within this metaphor is that we are all slaves to the comfortable attachments we have. Even if they are chosen by us, and thoroughly enjoyed, yet still they enslave us.

To break free and experience our birth-right of spiritual growth is a risky business; we risk losing what we enjoy, even what we treasure. Yet the sauciness is the voice of spirit, which insists that comforts are secondary treasures, of no real account, because the primary one is freedom and is incomparable in importance.

If we are not to surrender to the level of total capitulation, then there are times when we must speak out, whatever the personal risk. Even home, family and career are to be seen as inappropriate comforts if the price we must pay for them is the enslavement of spirit.

Certainly there is to be struck a balance between the compulsion to fly away to freedom, and reasonable constraints placed by the moral boundaries and legislation upon which society is founded.

Yet when we are pushed down to an extreme measure, we will often experience an almost spiritual degree of impudence that shows we still have a unique and self-assertive character, which cannot be completely tamed.

GEMINI 13

A GREAT MUSICIAN AT HIS PIANO

(ACHIEVEMENT)

RUDHYAR: A FAMOUS PIANIST GIVING A CONCERT PERFORMANCE

INSPIRATION

When we aspire to the highest levels then we learn how to inspire at the highest too

When we can find the confidence and inspiration to walk our own path, creative and free, we become a source of inspiration for others who cannot.

The greatest accomplishment is mastery of the ego

If, in our need to feel safe, we seek always to delight in momentary attention or superficial adulation, then our achievements will bring nothing to us but self-defeat. The great pianist is not great because of his dexterity alone – there are far deeper issues at play here.

It is better to rest assured in that all creativity contributes to human understanding, and take our security from that. By investing our sense of self-worth in the importance of being a small part of something bigger, we become more content to feel protected and nurtured by our community.

Individual art is actually the property of all; we must take but our own fair share of its rewards.

The greater achievement is not to demonstrate mastery of the piano, but mastery of the ego. This climax of skills and talents merely acts as a tool for us to attain to higher levels of self-improvement.

As mature beings, we aspire to become exemplars of our abilities in order to inspire others to raise their own levels of accomplishment. This shows another subtle benefit of softening the ego and sharing in collective accomplishment – the group actually raises up the individual to greater levels.

We should not let accolades prevent us from reaching up further. However far we get, there is always somewhere else to go, and the horizon of possibility always moves away from us as we approach it.

By continuous effort and withstanding the perils of flattery and rewards, we can expand our being and have some revelation of our true spiritual estate. Yet, even so, whatever we feel is an acceptable height of success is probably nothing compared to the highest potentials of our best nature.

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GEMINI 14

CONVERSATION BY TELEPATHY

(INTIMATION)

RUDHYAR: BRIDGING PHYSICAL SPACE AND SOCIAL DISTINCTIONS, 2 MEN COMMUNICATE TELEPATHICALLY

TRANSCENDENT CONNECTION

At higher levels of consciousness non-ordinary techniques can be accessed at will

A realisation emerges as we escape the bonds of ordinary life and dance to our own melody - that the bonds are illusory; that separation is itself an illusion. Trusting intuition more, we tune in to others to the level of mental rapport that rises to telepathy. We can even know what others cannot imagine is knowable.

We actually cause effects first in the unseen world through a web of undercurrents

Although it appears on the surface that interactive communication between people takes place completely in speech and gestures, the deeper truth is that there is a transcendent dimension involved.

The very fabric of fellowship comprises of limitless connections between every person alive, knitting a web that supports all of humanity's involvements. Information is exchanged constantly mostly without full awareness – by telepathy. Such abilities are usually referred to as passive, in other words, it is said they are 'picking up' what already exists, and do not refer to the effect of their perception upon the perceived. But observation will always impress upon, and change, the observed. We know this from particle physics as well as human behaviour.

Clearly there is more to this process than can be understood by the unfeeling mind, and indeed the fellowship between people expresses humanity's natural qualities of sympathy and cooperation. Despite appearances, there is in fact a deep and far-reaching resonance of empathy, compassion and kindness within the world.

An individual, intuitively trusting this type of influence, proceeds towards self-fulfilment in a subtle way – by intimation. Hinting rather than stating, they do not confront and provoke, but cause effects firstly in unseen realms. This speaks to the potential we all have to impact upon events without any physical evidence of that influence. We can tune in to the flow of what occurs, by which we gain influence, and then gently shift our perception towards our aspirations – by setting the mind to interpret things to suit our own purposes. If this is done with a loving heart, then it serves spirit, otherwise it serves our personal process of self-disclosure.

We can develop extraordinary capacity for achievement simply by moving naturally from one situation to another according to the organic flow of things, winning cooperation by responding easily and unthinkingly to undercurrents that give rise to the tides of change.

It is good to monitor our motives, to avoid manipulation by underhandedness, and important to use our unusual sensitivity to maintain a deep and universal sense of the life force as it shows through every time and place.

Many people can pick up very subtle feelings and ideas. Not much is discussed about this ability, especially not with a discerning approach – possibly because such people are not much given to analysis. Also, society generally disdains that which cannot be made measureable, and leaves transcendental issues within the scope of priests and hippies. Yet this is humanity's truest focus – to reach into the transcendent reality whilst being completely engaged in mundane interactions with the people and things that turn up and inhabit our unique world.

GEMINI 15

TWO DUTCH CHILDREN TALKING

(CLARIFICATION)

RUDHYAR: TWO DUTCH CHILDREN TALKING TO EACH OTHER, EXCHANGING THEIR KNOWLEDGE

VALIDATION

Received messages are not free from subjective bias so we should get confirmation

However trusting and confident we may be in our ability to reach into subtle realms of perception and communication, it is nonetheless of critical importance that these are validated by normal process. Those who shun this simple and reasonable discipline often become rather silly and accept foolish ideas as fact, they can glorify unworldliness and disdain intellect and rationality; some even lose their mental and psychological integrity.

One familiar with our roots sees us – because they hear our unguarded, graphic truth

It seems obvious, but worth mentioning, that we generally try to find ease in every situation; it is the default behaviour to bring things around to our advantage, such that we feel at ease.

It is also assumed that a person has a somewhat creative interest in a range of matters. It is unavoidable that we contribute something of ourselves to the milieu in which we operate, and anyone unable to share their ideas and impressions would be considered rather narrow-minded.

Each of us has a childlike familiarity with our roots – the Dutch children can be assumed to be speaking with more clarity in their native tongue, and reaching not only a more subtle empathy but a more refined degree of self-exposition.

On every level, we access a better grasp on life only when we get to a point of real clarification by talking easily with someone who understands us – significantly because they share a similarity of childlike experiences.

Self-confidence is the key to open up any and all avenues of life. It grows in direct correlation with the extent to which we learn to speak the unbridled colourful truth of all we have known and desired.

In the end, all relationships are reduced to a commonality of skills and backgrounds. No empathy can resonate between people who share nothing of ultimate value. Unless we can really tune in to another person's core sense of self, all connectedness remains superficial; nothing really matters between us.

We find ourselves through others. First, our experiences are vicarious; later they are personally realised. We cannot find terms for who we are unless we first borrow them – so we need to be open to certain others very deeply if we are to be open to our own hidden potentials.

GEMINI 16 – 20

PARTICIPATION

The curious, exploring mind discovers new realms of possibility and needs to present its original ideas to others both to test and to teach. Communication is key. Whereas drama and emotionality entertain and attract the necessary attention, it is robust, rational clarity of intellect upon which we can build our understandings. We need to isolate ourselves from confusion and intellectual falseness if we are to access the pure mind that is able to read the species' heritage of deeply hidden knowledge. The risk was always that our undisciplined, emotional appetite for shallow satisfactions would corrupt our mental integrity and lead to a forfeiture of truth and an obesity of undigested information through a process of moving on and wanting more before we have assimilated what we already have.

With intelligent participation, we find the ability to learn and understand things, so we can deal with new or difficult situations. The task of self-development is considered an entirely reasonable coping strategy, which includes conscious preparation for anticipated challenges that might come up, often together with a delightful ability to harness cooperation, and become immersed in communality of endeavour.

The human mind is capable of such profound concentration that materiality bends to its will. Such specialised focus requires motivation, and very often this is found with this promise of material abundance. The luxurious trappings of social status, which are emblems of individual success, are there to be enjoyed as fully as success itself. It is this very fullness of life, with its various associated enhancements, which raises individual personality into exalted states, and amplifies personal will. This same ability to be absorbed and focus the mind is applied to the task of holding a clear sense of identity whenever external forces push and pull.

GEMINI 16

A WOMAN SUFFRAGIST HARANGUING

(INDIGNATION)

RUDHYAR: A WOMAN ACTIVIST IN AN EMOTIONAL SPEECH DRAMATISING HER CAUSE

PASSIONATE PERSUASION

A powerful mind can hold sway over others and win them over to a new way of thinking

It is not effective at all to present new ideas in a dry matter-of-fact tone. The first step must be to win the attention of the group by persuading people that we have something of interest to say. An intrusive manner of speech is almost inevitable, probably backed up by hyperbole, drama and startling claims. Strong feelings are almost *de rigueur* - and to be felt not just acted out.

Mature adults assertively claim full involvement in shaping their affairs

Before the emancipation of women, it was accepted that certain categories of people were of lesser worth. These people – women – felt great indignation about this, and refused to continue to play along. They demanded full participation in life, as adults.

It is implicit that, for a community to operate effectively there must be mutuality in the exchange of opinions, so that each and every viewpoint is aired and heard.

In this way our life values are maintained both individually and as a community.

The responsibility, which goes along with this, is that we must desist from bias and bigotry and present our case in a reasonable and reasoned fashion.

This is how the worldwide reconstruction of situations unfolds without bloodshed. Diplomacy and democracy are attempts to resolve social stresses peacefully.

Unless all responsible members of a group have a franchise to exercise their perspectives and urges, then unreasoned conflict is inevitable, and the bloodletting begins. Opening up the power-sharing process eventually leads to benefits for all, in unimagined ways. All members of the community will enjoy an enlarged reach of privilege once false restrictions are lifted.

Yet, realistically, we have also to remember that those in position are always reluctant to diminish their influence. Power must be taken, it cannot ever be given, and righteous indignation is the first legitimate step towards justice – often followed by demands.

GEMINI 17

THE HEAD OF HEALTH DISSOLVED INTO THE HEAD OF MENTALITY

(DEVELOPMENT)

RUDHYAR: THE HEAD OF A ROBUST YOUTH CHANGES INTO THAT OF A MATURE THINKER

RATIONAL PERSUASION

Using mature argument to bring another to an unemotional understanding

The contrasting presentation, a more controlled, male orientation, is neither instinctual nor emotional and typically represents a significant degree of mental discipline whose powers of persuasion is invested in intellectual strength and rational argument. In society, whereas the first taste of a new idea may well be highly emotional and non-rational, the settled position will be backed up by reason and intellectual proofs that minimise subjective individual interpretation.

Soul achievement is measured by awareness of self and empathic appreciation of others

The beginning of all development is the accurate and truthful approach towards the facts of the matter; for example it is on the level of physical health that wellbeing is finally measured. The freedom of mind is forced to reconcile with the constraints of body and all that entails, including how to cope with the world – and yet there is more to discover. As we advance, we go beyond this survival-level comprehension.

The power of mind is unrivalled, and a well-rounded individual will be able to experience many lives in the realm of imagination, thereby developing an appreciation for other views and the different ways that people manage their own problems and aspirations. Whether this is facilitated by stories around the flickering campfire or flickering TV screen, we can learn so much about other possibilities and different attitudes of being.

Since the mind has absolute authority, it needs to be treated gently if to maintain the body in good health; this amounts to developing a general way of life based upon optimism and perceptive consideration of how we interact with people. The mind is thus released from the strain of fear-based thoughts, which lead to anxiety and belligerence.

Without constraints all achievements are of little consequence. Any fool may imagine, but it takes grit to actually deal effectively with reality, and a high degree of subtlety to understand how others deal with it differently. We all have to release the illusions and distractions of youth at some point as we come up against life's hard knocks, and this process investigates everyone. We have to find the authentic and unique expression of our core values and creative angle on things.

This process shapes the mind towards self-confidence and cooperative creativity, both of which have healing effect. We learn equally how to overcome difficulties, and to see exactly how to adapt our aim to align with a bigger, more realistic vision.

The real game is not so much what we achieve in material terms but what we gain in terms of consciousness of self. A developed person has a great deal of self-awareness, and they inevitably mature in their faith.

At this level of attainment the revelation occurs of an overarching vision for our lives – as an aspect of the eternal vision of a spiritually-aligned species of highly evolved beings.

GEMINI 18

TWO CHINESE MEN TALKING CHINESE

(DIFFERENCE)

RUDHYAR: TWO CHINESE MEN CONVERSE IN THEIR NATIVE TONGUE IN AN AMERICAN CITY

SOLITUDE OF THE SPIRITUAL SEEKER

To the general population the seeker seems very odd and speaks a strange language

In order to find rapport with others we speak their language, in their manner, and thus unconsciously take on certain of their attitudes and opinions. This is not supportive of a mind that seeks exceptional clarity. Such a mind needs to isolate itself from the twin dangers, which are either the dissolving or the crystallisation of one's own stance - we conform or become staunch. There will always be found a few like-minded deeper individuals to talk to but not in the common herd.

By mixing with our own kind, we focus our uniqueness, and so perfect our life potential

It is totally normal, and taken as fact, that people are different from other people. Difference is entirely commonplace – even to the point that there are Chinatowns in many large cities in many countries all around the world. Within one culture, another finds a small place to secure itself.

These differences tend to be perceived rather more as an intellectual idea – a prejudice – than a felt reality, yet they have profound implications.

We are drawn to collect together with others who share our perspectives and preferences and cooperate willingly with these enthusiasts, who share our special interests. This goes beyond nationality, to a more subtle degree of shared differences.

By this natural process, we are able further to specialise. This corrects any tendencies towards self-diffusion by getting us to focus on what makes us who we are and the aspects of uniqueness that sets us apart from others.

Through this we are able to become mobilised towards our special goals, and without this it is quite unlikely that we will do so as convincingly and effectively.

The track of our lives becomes particular – and we are obliged to adjust and readjust in a continual process of refinement along what may well be unusual lines. Ambiguities and imperfections are rubbed away by the friction of continual interactions with others along the way, others who are similar enough to understand exactly how best to help us refine our expression.

The core idea here includes that, if we want to evolve fully as an exemplar of our unique speciality, then we need to avoid excessive associations in unsuitable relationships. Only by mixing with like-minded others will we perfect our fullest life potential.

GEMINI 19

A LARGE ARCHAIC VOLUME

(BACKGROUND)

RUDHYAR: A LARGE ARCHAIC VOLUME REVEALS A TRADITIONAL WISDOM

ARCHETYPAL WISDOM

Wisdom existed before we began to interpret knowledge into words and behaviour

We students of the mysteries are just the latest in a long tradition of keepers of the secrets. Esoteric wisdom has been kept alive since the earliest times when original 'seed ideas' were first brought into form by a process of empirical observation, intuition and rational thought. Humanity has not been given the blueprint of its Universal Mind but had to discover it and attempt to reveal it. The secrets were kept safe for the true seeker to uncover. Whether this record is or is not physical seems secondary - the Akasha may or may not have been represented on papyrus but it stands strong either way, and we can find a way to read some of its secrets.

Experience and wisdom are more important than events and people

We were not dropped randomly into our lives – there is a social history into which we are absorbed, and it is the fabric of this that acts as the background for our own contribution to an unfolding tapestry. This is our heritage updated and made manifest, as it so often is in an ancient volume of stories and teachings.

We have the gift of immediate practical guidance and the chance of broader self-discovery simply because we have access to this story of our roots. It is written in the behaviour, language, customs and moral attitude of our parents, neighbours and friends. Our very understanding of the nature of reality is created from these sources and we draw nourishment, as do roots from the soil, as we reach out to take in more of our social environment.

Of course, we must guard against any inclination we might have to worship tradition and its authority figures slavishly, yet whether to conform or rebel we need a place to start. The past illuminates the present, so we have much to gain from its teachings as a starting point for what follows as life evolves.

By going over again what others have previously touched upon, we gain a distinctive advantage. We have no need to waste time reinventing the wheel – we are assured of greater wisdom than we could develop alone. Personal evolution not only contributes to, it depends upon social evolution. If this is particularly important to us then we will have the tendency to examine and contemplate in depth what went before.

Some of the life paths we need to walk have to be cut and won through exhausting efforts – but the well-trod paths bring quicker satisfaction with an affordable expenditure of energy.

Surely our first achievements are simply to re-tread familiar tracks? This is a community-building obligation, keeping alive society's networks, life-giving arteries that preserve our unique heritage; we absorb and pass on the essential features of our background by living in accordance with customs and approved ways of life.

Most of what we hold precious can be taken from us in a moment when catastrophe occurs; but our experiences cannot be lost. Eventually we come to learn that experience, both personal and collective, is more important than specific events and individual people – because it is beyond any risk of loss; it is passed down and kept strong by true community, and is stored in the memories and abilities we took on during our upbringing.

GEMINI 20

A CAFETERIA

(SUPPLY)

RUDHYAR: A MODERN CAFETERIA DISPLAYS AN ABUNDANCE OF FOOD, PRODUCTS OF VARIOUS REGIONS

DANGERS OF SUPERABUNDANCE

If we take in more than we can digest then the wastage that occurs is a potential problem

Since early days, when trade enacting the search for spices to improve our food triggered the exchange of knowledge and ideas equally as much as the exchange of surpluses, humanity has relentlessly expanded its range of foods, things and ideas to the point where the surpluses are so obscene that nothing much is being properly assimilated. The waste is perhaps even more harmful on the level of mind than materiality, since truth is all but entirely lost and no discrimination remains between what is factual and wise and what is silly nonsense or lies and a corrupting influence upon the collective Mind. The terrible cost of having failed to moderate our will to expand is an existential threat and the defining principle of our Age.

Things flow better when everyone plays their part

When each person in the community is employed appropriately, exploiting each other's self-competence enjoyably, then there is an ease of flow in everything. A cafeteria is a good example. The supply of food is essential to community, and it gives greater choice, better economics and a warm social element when done collectively.

It's true that sometimes a person will not exchange fairly and practise abuse through the self-serving attitude of a dilettante. That can be endured for a while.

More typically, people try to organise their own special experiences to serve the best interests of the community at large. There may be various personal explanations as to why this occurs: perhaps their upbringing has trained them to feel it is a 'good' thing to do, perhaps they calculate that the long-term benefits are worthwhile, or perhaps they have an inner sense of happiness in service. It all amounts to the same thing in the end.

It becomes evident that the net result of this general approach to life is that the whole is significantly greater than the sum of the parts – everyone gains, and there is greater abundance. This is the principle of synergy.

It encourages everyone to contribute fully as everyone has opportunity to play their part in the total picture. The urge to participate arises out of some powerful motivations: the sense of rightness given by the spirit of taking part, experiencing ourselves to be worth our salt and enjoying the respect and recognition of our peers.

'Division of labour' has a strong part to play in structuring social and economic relationships that serve a healthy community. It goes well beyond the everyday patterns of our social interactions that were taught and learned and has evolved into the best collective strategy for tribal survival upon which individual survival depends.

Sharing in the preparation and consumption of food is a matter of fundamental importance in every community, and brings a spiritual-level enjoyment of harmony and realism, yet the principle applies to a much wider degree – in any project, we become better integrated with our fellows when we share the work. As a direct result we enjoy great fullness of self-expression and wellbeing.

GEMINI 21 – 25

INSPIRATION

As we try to show what we have discovered we cannot fail to reveal that aspect which speaks to the fundamental duality of being that underpins all existence. Any purely intellectual explanation is insufficient and any attempt to live in denial of the emotional side of life must fail. We need to balance mind and heart if we are to reach great heights of creative thinking. Then no problem is too constraining and we can find an imaginative way to address all that arises. Such balance always needs to be learned; it is not at all self-evident to us and we need guidance and a degree of self-containment to find the way to optimize our creative processes.

Gemini happily inhabits the shoreline between what is and what could be, playing with things and thoughts with a trickster's dexterity, and a child's innocence of agenda. This generates an atmosphere that so often attracts the muse. If we are prepared to risk rattling the status quo, then every new situation becomes an opening that supports us on our path of growth, and the reward for such uncensored personal participation in events is to reach an inspired level of understanding. When our aspirations are allowed to soar, we reach for the skies, and in so doing become a model for others, and consequently raise their eyes up to greater imaginings. The birthing of inspiration demands some degree of protection. So, since fledgling ideas need to be nurtured, we have to put our stamp on the world – but only to a certain extent, because life is never fixed; it has to be lived energetically somewhere between what is safe and what is fun.

GEMINI 21

A LABOUR DEMONSTRATION

(REPRESENTATION)

RUDHYAR: A TUMULTUOUS LABOUR DEMONSTRATION

OUTBURST

It is healthier to release pent up emotions rather than to continue repressing them

Workers treated unfairly by oppressors are so often over-stimulated to act hysterically by the rhetoric and other clever mind traps of those who want to stir up trouble. Similarly we are all subject to the persuasive force of words from politicians, marketing managers and authority figures, to elicit particular behaviours. Yet part of us rebels against this - it may sound right but it doesn't feel right - and an inner compulsion causes us to rebel emotionally.

Debate upholds the honour of human spirit, crafting justice and depth of principle

When people feel the lack of representation in deciding important matters, then they rise up. A labour demonstration is the normal method in the industrial arena – workers strike and management is required to respond.

It is typical that almost always the underlying, conflicting issue is seen as one of justice and the right to fair treatment. Karl Marx has presented the philosophy that '*property is theft*', that private ownership is invalid and that no one person should, for selfish enjoyment, and with an exception of social stewardship, control resources that properly belong to the community.

Bluster and emotional ill-will are futile behaviours. Appropriate representation of a cause needs to be presented cogently and with unified strength.

It takes courage to tackle major issues, and yet without such confrontations these values cannot be identified as core principles, nor proclaimed as appropriate social hypotheses. Yet as a result, inevitably both sides to a dispute are forced to raise their consciousness, and face what has previously been swept under the carpet.

Groups and individuals prosper to the extent that they find justification for what they are and what they do. Each determines values by which to validate their activities, and such determinations have to be hard-won in order to have true merit and any depth of substance.

In this way we observe that conflict can have a very positive effect – and, if we would only trust in the unimpeachable integrity of human spirit, we could allow more controversy in our dealings with each other. Conflict has a very bad reputation, some think of it as simply wrong. Yet, if handled well, it surely leads towards positive, evolutionary change – as nothing else could.

Our circles of influence are built around values – and values are established through demonstration and resistance. We cannot escape dispute if we are to build an authentic philosophical basis for our lives.

GEMINI 22

A BARN DANCE

(GREGARIOUSNESS)

RUDHYAR: DANCING COUPLES IN A HARVEST FESTIVAL

CHANNELLED RELEASE OF EMOTION

Emotion is a normal aspect of being human and has a proper place in the natural order

The industrial city life with factories, and therefore worker unrest, is contrasted by the pastoral village life where it is normal to celebrate the swings and roundabouts of our feelings, which are more in tune with the seasons and rhythms of Nature. As a healthy society include both cities and villages, so a healthy person includes both intellectual and emotional drives and values.

Our values, ideals, aspirations and prospects depend on community exchanges

A compelling motivation for us all is to obtain satisfaction through being exactly what we are – whatever circumstances we find ourselves engaged in. This delivers self-assurance and its attendant sense of confidence and appropriateness.

As we emerge out of the self-centredness of early childhood, we learn that we need to balance give and take in how we connect with others. Exchanges take place on the level of trade and social interactions, and these must have both parties feeling fairly treated for the relationship to last and flourish.

At a barn dance we meet various members of the community – some close to us, some more distant – and the success of the event is assured by everyone's willingness to share this rich experience. We should not take gregariousness for granted; it speaks to a general background atmosphere of security, trust and openness towards strangers.

The event shows of our own willingness to participate in society, and enjoy the fruits of an easy division of labour. Some prepare food, some play music and some are there just to dance.

This is just one example of how it is sometimes entirely appropriate to plunge into life's opportunities for the joy of communal involvement. Though we so often forget, we depend upon society for everything we are and everything we have – including as a matrix that gives form to our ideals and aspirations.

It is inappropriate therefore to engage at only a superficial level and only put our petty indulgences out into the world. We are encouraged to share passion, to reveal our nakedness of feelings, and the vulnerabilities and strengths that give us our special characteristics.

If we restrict what we offer, we necessarily limit what we can receive. It is pointless and self-defeating, raising caution as greater than trust, fear greater than love.

GEMINI 23

THREE FLEDGLINGS IN A NEST HIGH IN A TREE

(ELEVATION)

RUDHYAR: THREE FLEDGLINGS IN A NEST HIGH IN A TREE

BEGINNINGS OF SPIRITUAL INTEGRATION

Support for our first attempts to creatively express our spiritual awakening

A mind that is able to hold its rational and non-rational aspect in equal dynamic balance is able to rise above conditioned, unconscious states of being. This is the necessary, integrated attitude of mind that supports true creativity.

The birthing of inspiration necessitates a degree of sanctuary

Before they are launched into a dangerous world, fledglings are protected from it by the nest's elevation. Our nascent ideas are similarly in need of protection before we expose them to the world at large and risk exposing them to ridicule and opposition.

The early immature stages of a new initiative are almost transcendental in nature – more light than substance, and therefore often more to do with idealisation than workability. Before we try out something new and commit energy and resources to its realisation, it is wise to understand something of what gave rise to the idea, and also what might be the implications of making it manifest.

This will enable an early appreciation of the possible merits or demerits, while action is held in abeyance. Potential is a power that can grow, but only if carefully held and nurtured, awaiting its time. As we wait, it is useful to review our ideas in a more detached, elevated perspective.

Elevation brings higher consciousness and through it we gain supervision, super vision, the superior aspect of vision, which allows us to distance ourselves from the emotionality and fixity of mind that robs us of wisdom.

Genius, the universal possibility, is brought into the world by a process not an event. Its early stages include the spontaneous inception of a visionary ideal – and then a formulation into what can be made workable. Both the ideal and the practical must contribute to required outcomes in the real world.

Any fool can proclaim something to dazzle the gullibility of the psychologically impoverished – blind leading the blind towards failure and waste, due to poor planning and poor timing. Yet true inspiration, which eventually propels humanity to new heights of evolutionary excellence, must first be contemplated in a mental zone free from engrossment of worldly concerns.

It takes the chess-mind of rational intelligence to anticipate many moves ahead so that the projection, from idea into action, has an optimal chance of realisation. So when something important arises as a new, inspired idea, it may be advisable to take time out away from the busyness of the world because on retreat we open up to see things more clearly. Before accepting them as valid, we can witness our own thoughts to examine their causes and the potential effect of following them.

GEMINI 24

CHILDREN SKATING ON ICE

(FUN)

RUDHYAR: CHILDREN SKATING OVER A FROZEN VILLAGE POND

REFUSING TO BE DEFEATED

To 'rage against the dying of the light' is to resist the power of death

The creative mind is not frozen into uselessness by situations that appear impossibly restrictive to others. In fact the awakened individual seeks challenges in order that they can rise to the occasion and develop further skills and maturity.

Life is never fixed, but lived energetically between what is safe and what is fun

These children are engaged in a dangerous activity that to some extent threatens their lives.

They do this for fun. Life is nothing if it is not an experiment to experience the enquiry into what is, and what is not, possible for a human being living with a vulnerable physical body. Children are more likely to play with this idea.

It is important to have a sense of the value of dependable reality – partly because our very beingness is entirely characterised by how we feel about what is safe for us. No doubt the ice was examined and found to be reasonably reliable so the danger was diminished to an acceptable degree.

The truth of who we are often hangs in the balance between what is safe and what is fun. There needs to be a sense of order and caution that puts some boundaries in place to limit our exposure to risk.

Yet the pioneering principle is entirely descriptive of the healthy person – for whom successful overcoming of risky challenges act as a spur towards further achievement. This demonstrates and develops our skills and capacity.

Life is never static; it cannot be life if it does not change. So we are always necessarily exposed to new conditions, whether or not by choice.

Perhaps therefore we must embrace adventure, as a condition of life – although of course there is the need to moderate excitement-driven foolhardiness.

GEMINI 25

A MAN TRIMMING PALMS

(ENHANCEMENT)

RUDHYAR: A GARDENER TRIMMING LARGE PALM TREES

CONTAINMENT OF WILDNESS

Wholesome limits must be applied to our urge to expand our knowledge and experience

Allowing free rein to the mind's powerful urge to expand can simply generate wild imaginings and cluttered thought processes. Education, in its true, wholesome sense of 'leading out', can helpfully shape the patterns of a developing mind by offering structure and disabusing us of silly nonsense.

We put our stamp on the world by showing the relationship between Spirit and Matter

In some countries, we often see someone shaping a garden hedge to enhance the perceived beauty of the environment. Is this more than just an empty display of trivial skills and surfeit resources?

It's an interesting question, and possibly depends upon what is the intention. Some people continually reveal to the world their aesthetic sense and sensibilities, enlisting every aspect of Nature's beauty to do this.

In so doing, they demonstrate an intrinsic harmony between a person and their tools and materials. This is actually how we interface with Nature. Spirit and Matter is in relationship: surely the essence of all life?

On an emotional level, such activity engenders pride of effort – job satisfaction. Anyone who has felt this feeling knows it to be filled with light have great value for its own sake, even if the work itself has no great significance in the overall cosmic scheme of things.

However localised and modest is our own reach, nevertheless we want to put an immortal stamp on the world. We strain to bend to our will whatever natural resources are required for the task and ardently hope that something of what we plant will outlive us.

Whatever our special talent may be, we feel it as our gift – to offer in effective service to enhance our environment. Thus the spirit of creativity is transferred into form and made real and known.

Somehow this process enables us to feel a sense of self-justification. This is a deeper experience than ego-gratification, and indeed allows us to access something of the soul's purpose on earth – to experience itself in the truth and beauty of form.

GEMINI 26 – 30

ENCHANTMENT

Having brought into form what we, uniquely, desired, then discovered how far we could go with that, we show the world who we really are. This begins when we strip away all but the essential self and relate to others truly authentically. This is a new feeling and joyous liberation of the soul whose freedom to express itself becomes a model for others to see and appreciate.

There is a compelling force, evidenced by the power of Nature, which can momentarily stop the world and freeze our attention to the perception of something awesome, the magic of splendour, an enchanting experience that Gemini lives for. The revelation of beauty is a spiritual experience, and we want to find that quality within as a resource, and as proof of our own cosmic significance. Then we can get into a state on the spiritual planes, where all investment in failure and success is seen as futile, so we can easily let go of any attachment to the rewards and penalties of normal life and rise above even the best and worst of ordinary circumstances. Radiant and charming, we bring the light of optimism to all around, and affirm, through a beautiful nature, the presence on earth of such qualities.

GEMINI 26

WINTER FROST IN THE FOREST

(SPLENDOUR)

RUDHYAR: FROST-COVERED TREES AGAINST WINTER SKIES

THE ESSENCE FORM OF RHYTHM

Ridding ourselves of non-essentials to know the absolute essential truth in its natural form

Beneath all of our urges and feelings, which arise out of being incarnated physically, there exists the essential self. This is real in a way that all external expressions are not and we can only resonate that purest of vibrations when we are pruned of our dressing and naked of glamour. We can then see the most beautiful truth of who we really are.

The true perception of beauty is a spiritual experience

Nature's supreme power and beauty shows us how seemingly banal realities can in fact create the conditions for magical outcomes. For example, by nothing more esoteric than shifts in temperature and pressure to create hoar frost, she can transport even the most cynical materialist into experiencing wonderment.

Magick is a normal demonstration of life that requires particular space and time constraints. Freezing the moment has cosmic significance and is a necessary and sufficient condition of the art. To bring about these magical moments, we have but to put aside our private concerns and become responsive to the great forces responsible for life's never-ending self-embellishment.

Ordinary habits of homebuilding and feeding ourselves are for comfortable maintenance of the status quo, whereas the discovery of our full potential demands that we engage with the non-ordinary. We need to accommodate a continual process of self-purification which includes monitoring our own perceptions – only then will we be able to master the 'here and now' and create magical beauty as a life style.

It is Nature's way to freeze to death that which cannot survive winter. Purification through these transformative moments enables old cycles to give way to the new. We have to adopt the same approach to our own situations – to cut away the dross so that we only ever have vitality in all we touch. Whatever is not passionate and full-on, whatever does not demand our complete attention is partly frozen and so life-denying.

Somehow the radical irreversibility of death deepens our sense of beauty, and raises it to spiritual levels. The beauty is incidental, a subjective human sentiment; yet is there anything more splendorous? Pushing involvements to their limit brings intensification; this leads to passion or death. Splendour must be passionate to be splendid.

Reborn after the death of winter, we are primed to see things with new eyes, eyes readied for new cycles and the inherent shift of perspectives. In this way and in accordance with our newly expanded vision, we create our worlds afresh by pruning out what does not have splendour.

Beauty is in the eye of the beholder. This has become a cliché, whereas it hides an important esoteric understanding – that there is nothing absolute except the Absolute; everything which is not transcendental is subjective – and if it is seen as splendour, it is because we have learned how to look for splendour.

GEMINI 27

A GYPSY COMING OUT OF THE FOREST

(EXPENDITURE)

RUDHYAR: A GYPSY EMERGING FROM THE FOREST WHEREIN HER TRIBE IS ENCAMPED

CIVILISATION

Moving away from Nature into structured ways of being in order to grow in consciousness

Normal rhythms of life inevitably strip us down to basics, like it or not. The truly advanced soul will actually seek such a self-revelation; they choose to leave behind their natural inclinations in order to relate from a place of utter authenticity and awareness in order to shift up to higher realms of being.

We have found our proper place only when we spend our money and time enthusiastically

A gypsy has quite a strong symbolic resonance for most of us, on various levels. We see them as marginal, not fully embraced by mainstream society and a little wild in their unencumbered life style – going their own way and closer to Nature than we city-dwellers.

They have not given up the fruits of the forest and as part-time modern hunter-gatherers, take whatever is there to take. They live more in the moment and take their joy as freely as their food; their spontaneity of feelings is well-celebrated.

We can also identify a strong sense of family and tribe, and this only comes about when the individual's expenditure is generally in alignment with the integrity of community needs.

There arises from this a strong disinclination to enter and participate in general society – not wanting to expend resources into a world apart. Why pay taxes to a system that marginalises you?

There is within all of us the passionate imperative to be recognised and successful as who we are – and this does take us out of the common herd, and typically into our more intimate clan.

When we share our troubles, aspirations and faith with kindred spirits, we give all we have, and follow the collective dream towards new horizons.

It is this, and in the end only this, that promotes a general state of enthusiasm for life. We all have a little bit of the gypsy in us. Only when we notice ourselves spending our money and time freely and enthusiastically have we found our proper place – which may well be outside the city walls.

GEMINI 28

A MAN DECLARED BANKRUPT

(DELIVERANCE)

RUDHYAR: THROUGH BANKRUPTCY, SOCIETY GIVES OPPORTUNITY TO AN OVERBURDENED INDIVIDUAL

RELEASE OF INTOLERABLE BURDEN

Neither success nor failure have lasting significance, each needs to be released

Reaching up to new levels of consciousness we choose to affirm a new beginning and allow that all previous failures and loss belong to the past and have no place in things as they now are. Our community has to be a little hard on those who fail in order to guarantee its own survival, yet it is also somewhat compassionate, at least institutionally, and releases anyone from unfulfilled obligations if they are willing to have another go.

On the spiritual planes, all failure and success is futile

Sometimes apparent misfortune is a blessing. Yet so often we betray the core values of self by dodging responsibility, even going to the absurd depths of trying to cheat karma.

The worst of situations, although universally unwelcome, can bring unlooked-for benefits, since through them we learn to develop and demonstrate resourcefulness.

Human spirit is unparalleled in its capacity to create solutions. Each individual discovers that they have capabilities that far outweigh their previous expectations, which lie dormant unless and until there is a demand made upon them to find the wherewithal to cope with something previously they have feared and avoided.

This facility to solve problems is empowered as we gain greater consciousness that ultimately all failure and success, all reward and penalty, is futile. At a higher level of spiritual attainment, we can learn to adjust our life strategies in line with this knowledge. Neither success nor failure has any real significance in the larger picture of things. Our strategies thus become more like fun than ambitions. We enjoy success, and since failure always gives rise to greater success, then failure is in fact an aspect of success – a stepping stone towards it.

What truly matters is our ability to enter new paths of opportunity even when misfortune strikes, in fact especially then. How often do we come across someone whose story is of success emerging out of seeming failure? It happens so often that we can surely come to depend upon it as a reliable process of normal development. The optimist learns not only to accept disappointment calmly, but to use it as a signal that indicates the presence of an exciting opportunity – so they actively look for the silver lining.

A sincere seeker welcomes another chance to refine the self by demonstrating indomitability. The advanced person no matter what occurs is always able to bubble up and bounce back, and so has no dread of misfortune.

One with this wisdom is delivered from loss; in fact the deliverance goes deeper, even to the level of consequences. We learn that, as long as we have people round us, we are never bankrupt – we see that there is but one consequence that has any lasting significance – and that is the convergence of relationship. What really matters is the quality of connection that arises with other people; whether enjoying success or coping with adversity, what adds sparkle to life is doing it together. Each scenario, even seeming misfortune, comes to us so that we can experience another version of the universal interconnectedness of all that lives and has form.

GEMINI 29

THE FIRST MOCKINGBIRD IN SPRING

(QUICKENING)

RUDHYAR: THE FIRST MOCKINGBIRD OF SPRING

JOY OF A FRESH START

Each new dawn has its own sense of renewed excitement

It is very liberating for the soul to feel the sense of renewal that comes with new beginnings after a period of hardship. It raises up its voice and sings like a bird, no longer only imitating but adding its own flourishes for no other reason that to externalise its joy.

By revitalising others, we become more enlivened ourselves

There is but one place to stand in life that is safe and comfortable, and which gives everything a sense of both meaning and beauty; it is the place of truth. Knowing this instinctively, we propel ourselves, and are drawn, into experiences that enable us to strengthen the authentic core of our being.

We become a constant stimulation to others in the normal course of human affairs, and this has a quickening effect. By revitalising others, we become more enlivened ourselves, and this forces an enquiry into who we are and what we represent.

The mockingbird has learned an important technique that could benefit us – how to imitate. This skill rapidly enhances participation within a community; by copying we gain both knowledge and acceptance. At first we need to tune into the group in order to find a place to be, and then our idiosyncrasies will stimulate a response – without any need for controversy.

It may well be enough to offer only beauty, and let truth simply be. In other words we are certain to reveal ourselves whether we choose to or not – and such revelation will promote our stature all the more if done with a sense of grace and courtesy.

Our purpose is self-refinement. We intend to be more and more who we are and we want that to have a refined quality. This is self-evident. Our aspirations guide us on the path that will disclose to us the best version of who we truly are, as long as we allow ourselves to engage fully with those we meet en route.

It is inevitable that some people will find this degree of self-assertiveness annoying – and such people are the best teachers for us to learn refinement.

If we think of self-refinement as oil – then it greases our path. Whatever we aspire to realise in life is only ever an horizon. For some, that means it is inaccessibly far; for we others, our current vision is only ever seen as a temporary goal.

GEMINI 30

BATHING BEAUTIES

(CHARM)

RUDHYAR: THE FIRST MOCKINGBIRD OF SPRING

EXEMPLIFICATION

Choosing the best sets a standard for people to accept as a defining quality of values

Any culture will glorify the best example of whichever qualities it holds up as representative of its highest values - whether this is done with Oscars, Nobel Prizes or red ribbons at a local rodeo. This process stabilises, promotes and communicates the best current standards for individuals to try to exemplify. We show what we are and what we have achieved in order to win social validation.

Natural endowments are gifts of Nature, to be shared

We are physical beings, whose access to the realm of spirit enhances our physicality to heights of beauty. When we have awareness of both spiritual and physical magnetism, then we are endowed with the radiant light of Nature and we are said to glow.

Charm, generally, is a grace of the material world. Although it is self-seeking and therefore somewhat potentially manipulative, it nevertheless somehow adds a degree of spiritual lightness to situations. A woman showing off her physical beauty intends to exert influence – yet when she does so with naive innocence then joy is experienced. A thin line may be drawn between, on the one hand, healthy and helpful self-disclosure, and, on the other, childish vanity. Caution and self-examination are advised on this point.

Having a strong sense of self-worth, we are able to project principles into the world, standing tall amongst our fellows, radiant and reliant, and making a clear disclosure of what is personally important.

One who is strong in their inner sense of individuality fears no loss or threat to it when confronting difficult issues. Rather the opposite is the case; such challenges that may arise serve to affirm and perfect individuality. For such a person, no feelings of false modesty are allowed to interfere with whatever exuberant displays occur of their attributes and charms. Natural endowments are gifts of Nature, to be shared.

With a focussed intention and a sense of sacred purpose, we can raise all of our qualities and attributes to serve the greater good. This is made possible by trusting that, however imperfectly expressed, our strongest impulses will always eventuate good outcomes.

The soul's influence upon everyday life is facilitated only between the threshold of two worlds – the two worlds of outer situations and inner responses. It is the soul's primary task to maintain its absolute purity whilst having to touch upon this imperfect *world of lies (*a Sufi description). Spiritual practice helps.

That purity is evidenced by the soul's ability to be true, even when encased in clay and operating as a member of a rather primitive species of self-destructive brutes. If our life is to express joy rather than endure restraint, then freedom must be realised on the inner planes, as a state of being, independent of circumstances.

CANCER 1 – 5

PIONEERING

The first half of the zodiac teaches about how we emerge out of unconsciousness and put our own unique stamp upon the world. The first 3 signs are about differentiation as we experience desire, which is shaped by potency, made into form, confirmed and then expanded in its reach by discovering new ways to be and showing this to others. A major shift of direction occurs at the summer solstice when yang energies reach their zenith and the power of yin steals the light and, slowly but irresistibly, makes us turn within. The second 3 signs require us to stabilize who we are in order to gain better self-awareness, and begins with decision.

The development of the American nation illustrates how, in order to find a safe, wholesome place to raise families, it is often necessary to face the dangerous unknown – crossing an ocean or land-mass to do so. Even when metaphorically the oceans and continents are experienced within, such journeys can bring us into strange associations, and require us to adapt to extreme challenges.

To open up new territory, whether figurative or actual, involves a degree of recklessness, and this must be more than matched by an ability to control situations; we have to organise resources and events creatively and effectively. Adventures must be attempted with careful forethought and an overview of the bigger picture so that unimportant issues are assimilated, yet potentially destructive problems are avoided. A river's path is fluid and yet irresistible; obstacles serve to make it grow stronger and clearer of purpose. So too, our personal weaknesses must be overcome so that, by example, we can lead those who would willingly follow. Powers of persuasion need to be brought to a high degree to justify actions that could easily be misunderstood.

CANCER 1

FURLED AND UNFURLED FLAG DISPLAYED

(ADAPTABILITY)

RUDHYAR: ON A SHIP THE SAILORS LOWER AN OLD FLAG AND RAISE A NEW ONE

COMMITMENT

A point of no return when we reorient ourselves in a new direction

Any decision is a turning point that enacts a commitment to give up certain possibilities and dedicate ourselves to a given line of direction. At the cardinal point Cancer 1 we are reminded that the basic unit of human involvement is the family, and by extension the tribe, congregating in its place of habitation. We can think of ancient days when ceremonies to celebrate the sun's fullest power would draw together those who formed a tribal connection. Until we give up our freedom to vacillate, and make a choice about our allegiances, we cannot know the feeling of belonging that is celebrated.

Achieving primary objectives sometimes requires transient loyalties

Very often, what may appear to be a thoroughly negative attribute of personality is better seen as a poorly understood resource, a distortion of a valuable principle. Here we consider how instability and vacillation are occasional side-effects of an imperfectly expressed higher quality.

The path to any goal meanders and bifurcates without signposts, so that we are not always able to identify the optimal course of action. Those who are able to make concessions, to adapt and evolve their position, have greater capacity to achieve primary objectives.

Temporary allegiances are helpful, in fact necessary, to pursue any significant intention, and we can find ourselves joining some rather unexpected groups for a while, even some whose purposes seem opposed to our normal principles. To serve under the flag of one cause, and then another, is not dishonourable when the larger picture is considered. Sometimes the end justifies the means.

Yet the more inflexible is our determination to succeed with our greater, primary purpose at all costs, the more it acts as a rudder to guide us through stormy waters and shifts of wind direction. Every ambition is served by this, in fact the sincerity of our life path will surely be repeatedly tested so has to be repeatedly affirmed.

Since forewarned is forearmed, it is meaningful and desirable to anticipate tough challenges and make contingency plans. A consistent attitude is the best preparation for unexpected mishaps.

Indeed, with such a general outlook, every apparent mishap can be harvested as a benefit. This occurs by assimilating new ideas, and refining not only the path, but the detailed specifics of the goal itself.

It is the power of adaptability that enables profitable life management. Every awkward occurrence can then be perceived as a blessing in disguise; each situation can be made to serve the main theme of our deepest life purpose. This deepest purpose is to be fixed in focus, yet the route to its realisation will certainly require endless reorientations.

CANCER 2

A MAN SUSPENDED OVER A VAST LEVEL PLACE

(CONTEMPLATION)

RUDHYAR: A MAN ON A MAGIC CARPET HOVERS OVER A LARGE AREA OF LAND

EXPANDED PERCEPTION

In a secure situation, mind is better able to expand to see things from a higher perspective

A mind that flutters about between this and that is not sufficiently stable to centre itself upon higher realities. But when a clear determination is made, the possibility to see the bigger picture is found. In this state of elevated consciousness, we can see ourselves in the wider context as an integral part of the whole.

Contemplation is an aspect of optimal self-management

This is about widening our spread of understanding before making a determination about our committed position in any matter. The implication is that we must have a wide and deep self-understanding if we are to avoid foolish choices.

It is quite usual for people to omit properly to assess the down-to-earth considerations in the situation at hand, lost in some transcendent flight of fancy about the nature of reality. This inevitably leads to loss and disappointment and the consequent sense of failure and powerlessness.

The image of overview or supervision points to the need to take time – we need to make our decisions in a relaxed way if we are to have real freedom of choice. This is because we see life from a different, and usually more legitimate, perspective when free of stress.

Contemplation is an aspect of optimal self-management. It has a beneficial effect upon the mind and the physical body, and allows us to embrace a far wider appreciation of all the variables in play. Very few top achievers exclude this activity from their normal practices.

There is an infinite range of possible ramifications that follow each move we make. The more of them we can see and anticipate, the greater is our ability to uncover our potential to make the world how we want it to be.

Through contemplation we access the greater vision. We gain an unlimited overview of the bigger picture before getting tied up and involved in details.

This is how we escape from the bondage of our compulsions and habits – with poise.

CANCER 3

A MAN BUNDLED UP IN FUR LEADING A SHAGGY DEER

(INDOMITABILITY)

RUDHYAR: A MAN BUNDLED IN FUR LEADS A SHAGGY DEER

STRENGTH OF WILL

We can only develop a stronger will when challenged by great difficulty

There are challenges that arise when we face new levels of responsibility, we have others to consider and we are as yet inexperienced in expressing ourselves as part of the greater whole. It takes more than desire or energised curiosity to manage our lives - now it requires strengthening of will.

We are fully alive only when experiencing what is uncontrollable

The strange image suggests an outdoorsman with little adherence to conventionality or home comforts, and is indicative of the indomitable spirit of humanity as it faces the challenge of harsh conditions with confidence and grit.

Each of us has highly individual roots, and from these we grow firm in our conviction of who we are and what gives us our power. That part of us, which is concerned with survival and individuality, insists on strengthening itself through new experiences.

It is most helpful to consider all particular restrictions and handicaps as actually self-imposed and eventually unnecessary. We tend to accept limitations because of the comforts we require – but they are not beyond repudiation if our taste is for adventure.

From cradle to grave, we go through various phases of self-discovery, and at each point, we must find the inner resources we need to deal with what comes up – however strange, however challenging.

The trail-blazing instinct is writ deep and clear in the human heart. We are all pioneers on some level, and any permanent capitulation in the name of safety and pleasure is a distortion – an abuse of the principle of recuperation and rest.

Most normal experiences are self-limiting when allowed to become habitual and unconscious. Opportunities are everywhere to be found by one who disdains limitations and thus rejects the inevitability of always returning to the status quo and therefore the imposed authority of the powers that be.

Life is real and rewarding only as it can be carried on from something known to something unknown. We are fully alive only when experiencing the adventure of what is essentially uncontrollable.

CANCER 4

A CAT ARGUING WITH A MOUSE

(JUSTIFICATION)

RUDHYAR: A CAT ARGUING WITH A MOUSE

UNNECESSARY SELF-JUSTIFICATION

We must not lose opportunity to make a resolute and self-serving claim upon the world

The clever mind finds ways to justify why we should allow ourselves to slip back into old, selfish ways of acting upon desires and curiosity. The urges are many and have no inclination to be obedient to a major policy decision to become a better person. It is important to understand these inner ambiguities if we are to find ways to deal with them.

To achieve specific goals, the mind must be set before involvement

Self-justification is evidence of repression, and is frequently triggered by the processes of social integration. Our natural urges and society's pressure are two very strong forces. Our animal nature must not be denied, although to enjoy the fruits of social connectedness, it has to be tamed. War, and other violent crimes, shows us quite clearly how repressed passions eventually manifest – dangerously, and without even animal-level decency.

Our urges are as God-given as our conscience – so why is a cat arguing with a mouse? Why do we seek to justify what is natural? Yet we do. We deny instinct because we have been persuaded that reason is more social. Those of the herd have forgotten their individuality, and are inclined to trust this dry argument. Others cannot be civilised so completely that they will ever deny the animal passion – which they understand is life force. A powerful hunter kills to survive; it is natural. Yet society's answer is to provide daily cat food to soften the killer instinct and civilise the beast.

The human being is part angel, part animal. Each part has the strong imperative to assert itself over the other and yet neither would be so magnificent without this perpetual contest. Neither can ever win, so we play this fascinating game without wholeheartedly taking sides.

When we choose to have impact on the world, clear, yet dry, argument will not achieve the same type of influence as a passionate plea focused into persuasion; this can win both mind and heart. In other words it is necessary to focus desire and will through the lens of mind. If the mind lacks clarity or strength, then external forces will certainly bend its purpose.

If we expect to achieve specific goals, the mind must be set before involvement. Preparation for an event is a part of that event and in some subtle way can influence the outcome ahead of time. Full enthusiastic participation in the preparation stage therefore clarifies our values and optimises the likelihood of success.

Personal values develop through the co-creative interaction of two factors: self-discovery and confirmation through social integration. It's not enough just to feel what is right, neither is it good simply to be told by others.

The feeling that we are entirely justified when we enjoy passion as much as self-control allows us to channel the power of our desire-nature appropriately, giving the mind the opportunity to consult its conscience before it engages the will. In this way we tame the beast rather than trying vainly to put it to sleep indefinitely.

CANCER 5

AN AUTOMOBILE WRECKED BY A TRAIN

(DISPERSION)

RUDHYAR: AT A RAILROAD CROSSING, AN AUTOMOBILE IS WRECKED BY A TRAIN

KARMA

The community has power to bring destruction to an individual out of alignment

However much we honour the right of the individual to be fully self-expressive, it is always good to remember that that must be within the context of the community. Any attempt to repudiate our role as part of something bigger will put us up against our own shortcomings, and we will find we cannot escape the negative side of who we are.

Optimism diffuses dangerous negativity

It is absolute folly to allow any course of action to continue to the point of self-cancellation, since our only true and abiding obligation is to ourselves.

Circumstances unfold in their narrowing way from moment to moment. As the train inexorably approaches the car, options are becoming fewer and fewer – yet we need to remember that we always have choices, even if sometimes they are more to do with our responses and inner attitude than actions in the external world.

We are warned here to become aware of any aspect of ourselves that is self-defeating in its insensitive recklessness. It is commonplace to be tempted by self-harm, yet of course our best strategy is to find another way to express our feelings of remorse and dejection. When we identify and disclose our negative feelings, then our circumstances become less narrowing and our options more wholesome.

Whenever a sequence of events is set in motion there is an inherent tendency for completion. Unless acted on by some force, things continue in their given direction – very often towards destruction. If we are to avoid wreckage, then we must exercise our will against the flow of such forces in our lives.

Despite the negative imagery, there is hopeful wisdom to be found. We are wise to recognise that occasionally we need serious threats if our formidable life-affirming power of creativity is to be activated, so that we can then learn how to disperse all the threatening factors in a scenario – and reorganise our experience to suit our immediate preferences.

This facility is not simply a trick of perception as we manoeuver our thoughts towards optimism; it is evident in the objective facts of our lives. There is before us here and now exact proof of the sum of all of our thoughts and choices – we have all we have because of all we've done before.

Control is not given to us absolutely, life is bigger than that – yet we do have some small measure of it, and we can moderate the threats against us provided we keep a keen eye and a positive mind.

CANCER 6 – 10

HOMEBUILDING

The decision of greatest consequence - who we are - begins with the recognition that we fit into an integrated whole as part of a huge dynamic process of give and take. To escape the implied limits, of duty and inevitability, requires that we can imagine something that seems almost fanciful but we see that others can be special so we copy them until we learn to trust our own intuition more. Yet if we want to go the whole way we must find and follow a guide.

A home unites a collection of individuals into a group destiny by dealing effectively with concerns about security on physical and emotional levels. There are many aspects to homebuilding, and to realise each requires very careful attention, using whatever resources are available, and enlisting the potential of all members to help out.

Feeling supported and nourished on all levels, secure individuals can rise, since they are potentially made lighter of spirit, refreshed by the opportunity to dream, and the solid support that home gives. This tends to be dramatised as a journey, from a lower to a higher realisation of potential, and can give life a delightful sparkling quality. A playful individuality, and more fulfilling expressions of self, can easily arise out of the wholesomeness born of being freed from the debilitating drag of base-level survival requirements.

CANCER 6

GAME BIRDS FEATHERING THEIR NESTS

(METICULOUSNESS)

RUDHYAR: GAME BIRDS FEATHERING THEIR NESTS

RUTHLESSNESS OF NATURE

We have to face the cruel imperative that something has to die that we may live

The social aspect of stabilising our identity of course has to do with interaction between all the various aspects of being alive. At its most basic level, one group feeds another to create a food chain - so we give life and nurture to certain plants and domesticated animals so that we can later eat them. Very often in life we serve and are served, and then are served up; on some level we are all eating and eaten.

By carefully feathering our own nest, we help build community

As we pursue our own goals we actually fulfil the expectations of others; so by feathering our own nest we participate fully and legitimately in the balanced, dynamic order of community life. This is because individual and community are related and interactive components of each other.

There are innumerable choices to make – people to befriend, tasks to perform, places to go, and ideas to discuss – and these each have their own detailed characteristics to consider. A nest thrown together in a slapdash way does not serve its purpose, and similarly it takes perpetual meticulousness to build an optimal set of life circumstances.

Knitting together the constituent aspects of life is our creative purpose and joy; individuality flourishes only when it is able to establish its personal rights over some desirable segment of reality. The enthusiasm this expresses and generates is a powerful, dependable and unimpeachable motivation for each one of us.

Our initiatives are preserved to the extent that we are able to utilise the natural flow of life around us. What surrounds us, which together defines and describes our group, is the sum of all individual initiatives. We need to be resourceful, building upon whatever is available and shaping things according to our own desire and will.

By this, we participate consciously in a group destiny; we even derive our sense of life satisfaction from such involvements. We justify our very existence within the context of our immediate, current circumstances.

We seek to reconcile who we are with the expectations of our community, and what we ourselves claim within the context of available shared resources. It is this reconciliation that demands our meticulous attention. If we take too much or too little then our position within the community is non-optimal for all concerned. We must find a way carefully and considerately to balance our claims and our inputs with others', and rebalance them again and again in each new situation.

Our need is supported, our greed is not. We may have concerns over everyday security – many people fear lack – but if we can let go of these fears then the unlimited spirit of humankind can be released so that freedom and abundance can be enjoyed fully and enthusiastically by everyone.

CANCER 7

TWO FAIRIES ON A MOONLIT NIGHT

(ASCENDANCY)

RUDHYAR: TWO NATURE SPIRITS DANCING UNDER THE MOONLIGHT

OTHERWORLDLY REALMS

There is another realm that we inhabit through fanciful imagination

In contrast to the stark reality that can be seen as 'kill or be killed', in the imagination we are freed of the ruthless traits of earthly existence. We can dream of fairies in the moonlight and transport ourselves into the astral realm. Although non-physical, this realm has its own magical ways and its own power to create reality differently.

The soul is refreshed when occasionally we rest from normal reality

Unacceptable levels of pressure of life can cause us to indulge in senseless flights of fancy, inhabiting a world of make-believe. It's not at all helpful to do this, can be quite disorienting and cause real trouble.

Nature offers unlimited scope to release each of us from psychological and physical burdens that necessarily arise out of our involvement in life. Sleep is the most obvious example, so too is daydreaming, and yet these are meant as temporary restful states rather than realistic alternatives to worldliness.

Certainly, there is a need to balance everyday strains and stresses by finding a lightness of being, which the image of two moonlit fairies suggests. It is the soul's nature to fly and soar and, in moments when we can feel this, there are precious opportunities for inwardness and self-reflection; these arise as a matter of course whenever such a mood is present.

From this, one learns the ability to rise above any threats to wellbeing that would result if one felt a sense of inescapable, long-term, forced imprisonment in the realm of physicality and all that that entails – the compelling requirement to attend to the body's needs and so many emotional challenges.

On the path of self-realisation the sense of exaltation that comes from this lightness of being is a dynamic factor – in other words, we move along more readily if, from time to time, such abilities are harnessed and used productively.

So the very inclination we have to 'space out' can be productively channelled as a means to tune in and develop a transforming sensitivity. We then find that creative imagination has profound powers of healing.

Being occasionally detached from the normal heavy sense of self is truly liberating and such an ascendancy of spirit demonstrates the magical facility of selfhood.

CANCER 8

RABBITS DRESSED IN CLOTHES AND ON PARADE

(APPROPRIATION)

RUDHYAR: A GROUP OF RABBITS DRESSED IN HUMAN CLOTHES WALK AS IF ON PARADE

MODELLING OURSELVES ON A GUIDE

By copying a master's attitudes, beliefs, gestures and words we gain mastery ourselves

A time-honoured process for us to learn and develop is to imitate an established master of a craft in as much detail as possible. This method requires no wisdom or philosophy, we simply copy exactly all the physical processes of the craft and allow our own understandings to emerge as the skills take hold.

The real is established as it is dramatised

The suggestion some might take here, in this image, is that rabbits have misappropriated better clothes than they are worth, that they are showing off to gain some little glory, and add a touch of glamour to their dull lives.

And yet the vestments of higher implication are always available for lower life to wear experimentally. A cat may look at a king, and even dress like one.

The values and expressions to which we aspire speak of an inner sense of unrealised self, which needs to be awakened first by recognition. By dressing up we 'imagine up'.

In fact, we can even question the worth of any event that does not stimulate us to reach upwards beyond our current situation to higher ideals. How else could life work? Reality itself is only ever established by forging things out of thoughts – so why ever would we not choose to bring our thoughts to the level of ideal? The real is established as it is dramatised, typically from idealisation to realisation.

It is therefore wisdom itself to project the highest ideals that we can imagine for our lives onto the situations we encounter, and make it known that we are doing so with unlimited assurance.

Of course, we have to be careful that we are not ingenuously substituting affirmation for accomplishment. The upward reach of consciousness towards spirit is the glory of our species, yet to manifest heaven on earth we need to work for it too. Affirmation without appropriation is usually insufficient.

An important, if subtle, part of who we really are always lays dormant, waiting for us to grasp the form of it in the outer world of circumstances. This is appropriation – we must claim what is ours in order to make it ours – sometimes before anyone knows, and often by surprise. We can only do so when we trust our feelings of being worthy of our ideals.

CANCER 9

A TINY NUDE MISS REACHING FOR A FISH

(INCLINATION)

RUDHYAR: A SMALL NAKED GIRL BENDS OVER A POND TRYING TO CATCH A FISH

SIMPLY ASKING QUESTIONS

Answers are seeking questions as much as questions are seeking answers

Another, quite contrasting, process can also be applied towards the seeking of knowledge - innocent spontaneity. Questions have their own power and, when in the correct state of mind and at exactly the right time, we put a question into life, then very often the answer we need arises. If this way to gain understanding is to work well, then it is essential that we place no conditions or expectations upon the given answer.

What is of importance is engagement rather than outcome

When we are able to tune in to the innocent beauty of the soul, we behave without inhibition. This image shows nakedness to be as playful and natural as fishing.

Then every single eventuality sponsors excitement, and simple, unquenchable inquisitiveness – not a single aspect of life is unworthy of our attention and interest. Our inclination is to engage, and find whatever we can in every situation, knowing that there is always something within it to entertain our curiosity.

With this attitude, we bring significance to everything we touch. We clearly feel that what is of importance to us is the process of engagement rather than the resultant outcome. It is a rather childlike approach to life in the moment where the 'here and now' attracts all of our attention, and our willingness to respond is unsullied by self-doubt and obedience to social conformity.

This is in fact how we become capable of grasping the reins of control over every realm of enquiry in which we participate. We see what there is to see not what we are conditioned to expect or require, so our perceptions are more real and our degree of influence all the more effective because of that. Yet, a light touch is all that is required, since we have no great attachment to the result of our attentions.

Self-expression can be at a very high degree, nevertheless others tend to respond surprisingly well since there is charismatic grace in unselfconscious, open, honest simplicity. The smug selfishness of ambitious self-projection is replaced by naive enjoyment and ready responsiveness.

Our inclinations speak of an aspiration to reach out to become a better version of ourselves, in all innocence. With this approach, we need to be aware that worldly achievement is not well supported – because our perpetual shifting of attention and the frequency of trying out something new is rather incompatible with focusing on material goals; this approach normally demands a more defended nature.

However, because the soul is ever-present in its eternal, unimpeachable purity of spirit, it brings enthusiasm to all it encounters. If this is not evidence of the Divine within us, then what is?

CANCER 10

A LARGE DIAMOND NOT COMPLETELY CUT

(LATENCY)

RUDHYAR: A LARGE DIAMOND IN THE FIRST STAGES OF THE CUTTING PROCESS

TRAINING

The true seeker must undergo serious, committed training in the hands of a good teacher

We can copy experts and we can move forward intuitively but if we are to take seriously our journey from rough stone to polished, sparkling diamond, then we must be transformed at the hands of a master (if we can actually find a real one!).To become a master we need to be trained in mastery - and this typically requires diligence, tenacity, willingness to endure, and a healthy measure of humility.

Our connections are supportive of our life progression.

A diamond appears as an uninteresting chunk of glass until it is cut by an expert, yet it carries extraordinary latency of influence and beauty. Power and beauty are so often intertwined. The process of cutting and polishing for bringing out the diamond's inner flourish is valid – as indeed it is metaphorically for personality.

As the symbolic diamond of self is worked, so our personal reality is endowed with expanded dimensions of significance. All our connections and experiences are primarily supportive of our personal life progression – from what could be, to what is.

The skills and arts we develop have equivalence to those of the diamond-polisher. The world around us becomes somewhat dependent upon them as a means to bring to form that which otherwise only exists in its latent potential. Our values thus become an integrated aspect of our life by having a degree of influence over the circumstances of people we know.

With this level of awareness and attitude of approach we may become a shaping force – with a very effective gift for dramatizing the potentialities of everything at hand. People around us change and grow.

Our journey through life is a pilgrimage as we encounter the lower planes of existence and, through some service, reveal the higher meanings we have ourselves come to understand and embody.

The justification of any person is typically sought through their impact upon the world at large and the people around them. Not only the extent of this, but the quality, is assessed as the 'measure of man'.

It is ultimately futile to lean upon any static version of self, counting honours and possessions as though the past is real. What we are at this moment is an unrealised powerhouse of spiritual potential that yearns to be known for what we are in essence.

CANCER 11 – 15

INHABITING

Having come to acknowledge that we need to decide who and what to be, we monitor our physical urges and emotional responses to our environment before shaping a more considered philosophical approach. By ridding ourselves of inappropriate belief and opinion, we reveal much greater potential and assert the will more strongly in the direction of fulfilling the highest level of attainment. It is by walking the path of Truth that we find realisation of both the inner and outer planes.

People tend to settle down together in pairs, in families, as tribes and nations. This fact is not at all startling and is usually associated with advantages to do with combined strength, sanctuary and succour. However, we can also see how this process is entirely necessary to support the greatest degree of differentiation and refinement of the individuality of each member of the community. A person typically tries out variations of possible personal characteristics in order to inhabit their truest or most convenient persona. It's much safer, and probably more effective, to do this within a homely setting.

Influences passed down from mother to child supply much of the psychological material that binds a person to their ancestral heritage, supporting personal optimisation. The need to have some control over our physical environment serves to straighten out any overly-fanciful aspects of behaviour, and underlines the importance of following solid advice from older generations. This guidance consolidates our emotional resourcefulness, and helps to lead towards rich rewards, and the fulfilment of our highest expectations.

CANCER 11

CLOWN MAKING GRIMACES

(INIMITABILITY)

RUDHYAR: A CLOWN CARICATURING WELL-KNOWN PERSONALITIES

THE SUBTLE POWER OF LAUGHTER

There is much more to laughing than first appears; it is a tool to diminish self-importance

Laughter is a particular activity that serves the physical body's need to release tension. More than that is when the humour takes the form of ridicule and satire, where we see that overblown authority, in other words pomposity, is seriously challenged. We must learn not to take ourselves too seriously and, more importantly, not to lose ourselves in the false authority of those who would try to rob us of our freedom of thought.

Life is a continuing self-rehearsal

People try to conceal self-doubts, frequently using misguided humour to do so, and the exaggeration of some qualities and inhibition of others shows in everyone. This is normal, though often ridiculous, behaviour. There is great yet subtle pressure put upon us to shape our personality so that others do not feel threatened and are spared the inconvenience of having to adjust to our true, inimitable nature. This often brings to us a loss of dignity, which amounts to a kind of self-abuse, and this always leads to some misfortune. If we make clowns of ourselves to gain popularity or get a cheap laugh, then we must expect to pay a price, since in any disguise self-exploitation is certain to cost us.

Why do we do it? Perhaps we lack the inner conviction or strength of self-confidence to affirm who we are, and so put on the mask of a clown to entertain others. Yet for many people it is often because we don't actually know who we really are. In such a case, perhaps we find it stimulating to act in a way to provoke a comeback in others, and then find our reaction to their responses a useful experience to help us learn some lesson about ourselves.

This is much safer in friendly company, since our attempts to try out new ways and wisdoms in order to improve ourselves are much less likely to be measured or rejected willy-nilly when in the company of supportive friends.

Life is a continuing self-rehearsal; no one has managed to perfect their own personality, so why should we feel embarrassed during our own trial-and-error attempts towards perfecting our authenticity of being? Yet in society we are often subjected to the risk of embarrassment, beginning in infancy and at school, continuing for all of our lives. This is a device used to control us all to behave according to conventional, common standards.

Persuading another to our point of view helps refine and define us, and as we get clearer defining who we are, the need to hide and disguise diminishes. Then the impact we have becomes rather sharper and more dominant.

Perhaps we should see society's cultural requirements as the grit we need so as to be able to go through a polishing process, since without being squeezed into shape to fit expectations we would have nothing to resist and so would not be able rebelliously to affirm quite so strongly the idiosyncrasies of our uniqueness.

Of course we are wise to take off the mask when we are ready. Then, without prostituting ourselves in caricature, we will find that our own inimitable individuality is enough to earn the attention we desire and need.

CANCER 12

A CHINESE WOMAN NURSING A BABY WITH A MESSAGE

(MATERIALISATION)

RUDHYAR: A CHINESE WOMAN WITH BABY REVEALED TO BE THE REINCARNATION OF A GREAT TEACHER

RECOGNITION OF DESTINY

It is often enough that one person offers recognition for another to claim their destiny

Whereas the clown sees characteristic details to bring down the overstated individual, the visionary sees the integral wholeness in which an individual operated and so reveal their fullest as yet unrealised potential. We can offer a great service to another by seeing them more than they think they are; a true teacher will expect more of a student than they do of themselves.

Racial characteristics offer a foundation for personal expression

The baby – yet another child with yet another message – has its own story to tell of its race and times, notwithstanding the billions of previous attempts by others to express their own unique tale. Each of us can include far-flung capabilities of our racial coding, our family's genes and our cultural impressions, as we pull together the focus of our own special blend of talents and attitudes.

Born in only one place, in only one moment, we nevertheless have a multifaceted world, and an age into which we can expand. Who can ever imagine the reach and ramifications of any small event in our lives?

One thing is sure however – that we are an aspect of the process of materialising the universal values of our race into everyday consciousness.

This should not be allowed to become a distracted and completely unreasonable demand for recognition of our culture's special worth. Such a feeling is likely to leak out into a degree of xenophobic arrogance within the personality.

And yet when we perceive ourselves to be part of something historic and inevitable, greater powers can be resourced within us. To be alone and without a background is nothing; to be a special representative of the great race of China, with all of its vast history and future – this stimulates us to higher aspirations, and empowers us.

There is a symbiotic relationship at play in this. The race gains as much through the individual as the individual gains by having the power and support of a racial heritage.

There are many other factors at play, and yet the teaching here is that we succeed in life to the extent that we are able fully to embrace the particularities of our racial characteristics, as a foundation for personal expression.

CANCER 13

ONE HAND SLIGHTLY FLEXED WITH A VERY PROMINENT THUMB

(DETERMINATION)

RUDHYAR: A HAND WITH A PROMINENT THUMB IS HELD OUT FOR STUDY

EXERCISING WILL

To claim our destiny and fulfil our potential we must act strongly upon the world

The quality of will is that which determines the depth and reach of a person and this is also what shapes the character. Nothing much can be achieved by a person of weak will, not even the expression of individuality. If we are to become all we can be, then we need to put aside false pride and reach deep into what is true and real within.

We have to find a place to stand

The thumb symbolises the power of the species to fulfil its determination to dominate its environment. It is the law of Nature that the weak are destroyed; no amount of persuasion about ethics or reasonableness will thwart the power of the powerful. On some important level we have to engage with the struggle between hunter and hunted. Here, practicality is brought to the point of ruthlessness.

It is not helpful to allow this survival urge to degenerate into aggressiveness. Whereas it is completely meaningful to attempt to control all the forces – natural or human – that would otherwise intrude upon our security needs, it is short-sighted and self-defeating to initiate the projection of force beyond our domain.

Having bonded with family and tribe, we are then committed to secure our ability to develop our potentials – for self and community. If we allow ourselves to surrender to the great forces of our environment, this spiritual freedom would be forfeited, perhaps permanently. It is unacceptable from every perspective.

We simply have to find a place to stand in life, where we have confidence that we can deal with whatever threatens us. Trust and naivety have their place in life – but not as base-line fundamentals. In a dangerous world we need to secure ourselves first and foremost.

The push of our species speaks to humanity's belief in its own supremacy over all orders of Nature. We do not fear other species or capitulate to a stronger force that would attempt our eradication. As distinct from the constant terror of life for Neanderthals, this belief is the foundation characteristic of the modern human, as now our courage is directed more towards adventure than against attack.

Recently the dawning of awareness has emerged that we have taken this too far – that we are not showing sufficient responsibility for the environment and that we are abusing the power we have. With power must always go responsibility – and the steady hand of humanity's stewardship will begin to tremble and shake until we strike the right balance between Nature and nurture.

Yet we are not the same as other animals, we have a spiritual aspect that bestows upon us the duty of bringing light to earth – and that responsibility must be backed up by authority. With this sense of authority, we claim the right to self-determination, against all forces and environments. Only when we are safe from physical danger, unclenched and relaxed, can we truly open up to Grace.

CANCER 14

VERY OLD MAN FACING A VAST DARK SPACE

(SANCTION)

RUDHYAR: A VERY OLD MAN FACING A VAST DARK SPACE TO THE NORTHEAST

ETERNAL TRUTH

As all that passes away proves to have been ephemeral, what remains is the lasting truth

The archetype of an enlightened one is often portrayed as a wise old man - we think of Buddha, Lao Tse, Plato - and the association is with the unbending singular dedication to the study of Truth. Beneath all that changes, and above all visionary aspirations, is something that endures and is ever stable, basic and true. To live in remembrance of this is profound spiritual wisdom.

Our circumstances are a gift to enable further self-discovery

There is something rather beautiful about certain old people, who have learned to look at darkness and light with a similar level of detachment. In the face of death, all life looks rather transient and inconsequential, and this is one of the inevitable realisations that can dawn upon us when we more frequently bring to mind the certainty of our imminent death. To the mature individual it brings calmness and clarity.

It is neither necessary nor appropriate to dwell within a chaos of misunderstanding. This gives rise to a lack of any specific life-purpose, and is evidence of a failure to grasp the essentials of what it means to be in the world, with all of its darkness and light. However troublesome they may be, our current life circumstances are a gift that enables us to find something more within ourselves, and to enlist the deeper elements of our nature – in order to deal with whatever occurs.

With certain skills and attitudes, we can fully expect to attract everything we need and want, and to find love, comfort and meaning. The secret is to sanction and embrace rather than deny the murkier elements within us.

What is called the shadow part of our nature is deemed bad, or even evil, and unwanted. Yet, in truth, these are simply distorted expressions of energy – and are, in and of themselves, neither bad nor good. It is our distorted perceptions of them that need to be held responsible, and changed.

Our aspirations and expectations of the future have no authentic limit; in essence, any self-reduction is false. In order to delve into previously hidden areas, we need to sanction the dark areas of past experience that are so often only accepted non-judgementally by the very old. Only then will our perception of restrictions dissolve.

Eternal life offers the promise of the perpetual certainty of newness. We can enjoy rebirth with each new breath, and find renewal into purity and innocence. In Sufism, the word Bismillah is said frequently to indicate that every moment is a new beginning, and we can be reborn with each breath. In order to let go of that which prevents such rebirth, we first need to own it honestly, fully and without judgement by exposing it to the light of loving consciousness. Unless we do so, we are constrained to live a life with a lesser degree of richness and fulfilment.

Exploring the mysteries within, we gain realisations and understandings; then we can look at the past and by reworking our perceptions, we can find inspiration and increased self-assurance. What was once thought of as disgraceful can be redeemed; past hurt can be released. Forgiveness is divine grace, and heals distortions.

CANCER 15

GROUP WHO HAVE ENJOYED OVEREATING

(SATIETY)

RUDHYAR: IN A SUMPTUOUS DINING HALL GUESTS RELAX AFTER PARTAKING OF A HUGE BANQUET

MATERIAL ABUNDANCE

Though risky, the enjoyment of material abundance is a valid spiritual principle

In Sufism it is taught that each plane of existence has its own special mystery; the mystery of the Earth Plane is abundance. Whereas the attachment to material wealth is counterproductive to the true seeker, it is the attachment that is the problem not the abundance itself. Attachment to austerity is no better. It is known that all life is a reflection of our inner condition and when we have reached a high spiritual station, we are able to experience material abundance if we choose to.

There is no spiritual principle that disavows prosperity

The image of a group of people enjoying a well-earned banquet indicates richness and fullness to the point of satiety – satisfaction. How rarely is this the experience for most people, who create for themselves a sense of lack, envy towards the 'haves' and self-victimisation in the ranks of the 'have-nots'. There is no spiritual principle that creates poverty, none that disclaims prosperity – yet by the billions, people are given to deny themselves luxury and fulfilment as though the only way to God is through suffering and want. The reverse is true, at least when tempered by a healthy moderation.

Each life experience is a validation of individuality. We can rest assured that we are who we are and that is the consistent, entirely dependable, fact of material existence. We are not the same as anyone else, and so no-one else's life experience is the same as ours. Inherent within this statement there is the promise that, whatever we become as we unfold further potentials, life will match us step by step all the way. We get what we are – all of it and nothing else.

Life is nothing more than – and, importantly, nothing less than – the richness of expression of who we are, and who we are becoming. Whatever else it may be, life is a full-on intensity of experiences.

One way to see this is that we get what we deserve – our efforts are rewarded in full and fair measure. Thus we are able effectively to create a smooth demonstration in our circumstances of our degree of competence.

The events and situations of the future cannot exist except as an unfolding of the foundation we build now through our skills and knowledge. Who we are is like a table, upon which is built whatever comes to pass. This platform extends the realms of potential in certain directions as much as it limits it in other ways. Ironically, we are constrained to be expansive towards self-realisation.

There are penalties for those who resist or distort this condition of life – by either trying lazily or fearfully to freeze the present, or by permitting unrealistic or unecological self-indulgence of base appetites. Our environment is an aspect of who we are and it must be taken fully into account.

There is no survival strategy, nor creative richness of joy that is based on inadequacy. When we learn to accept that failure is not an option or indeed even an aspect of reality, then the final blocks to success are removed.

CANCER 16 – 20

PERSISTENCE

Our decision about who to be is consolidated into life through a threefold process - doing, feeling and understanding. The first stage of them begins with a concentrated effort to embrace each side of all the many inner ambiguities and polarities and, through that, progress towards greater fulfilment. We need to take full responsibility to finish what we start and integrate ourselves properly within the framework of our particular community, adopting certain of its customs and ways.

As a family or group settles, it becomes able to access a closer awareness of the hidden, enduring ideals that have somewhat mysteriously drawn together its members. These principles, perhaps once only felt or implied, become an explicit code or plan, and just as seeds unfold to give rise to unique versions of potentialities, so the people within the group, shaped by its collective visions, grow into individual expressions of the general type. This is borne out by survival issues. Growing members must be provided for, and the complex social organism that unfolds to deal with this is a fundament of the code. What we yearn to become is fulfilled through pursuing this code persistently.

The more spiritual dimension of the code takes the form of ritual and ceremony. Civilisation promotes conformity to bring all facets of life into alignment. So, across the nation, people sanctify special things in life – birth, marriage and death – with similar formalities, and such rituals have a strong binding force that, very effectively, allows homesteaders to identify with their tribe on a heart level. This has profound psychological and practical consequences since the mind becomes clear when the heart is at ease. Cooperation is taken to a more exalted state when linked to both the earth and the heavens, as indeed it needs to be if settlers are to survive and prosper. Because it speaks to a very deep need, this continues to have importance well after the settling first takes place, in fact indefinitely.

CANCER 16

HOLDING A MANUSCRIPT

(PROFUNDITY)

RUDHYAR: MAN STUDYING A MANDALA, WITH THE HELP OF A VERY ANCIENT BOOK

PROFOUND SELF-UNDERSTANDING

We must learn to understand, acknowledge and embrace all parts of our nature

Repeatedly throughout life we are placed in a position of choice and decision. According to our degree of realised wisdom we will see this as a conflict between this and that or an opportunity to learn how to integrate opposites as this and that. A mandala, based on the all-enclosing image of a square, suggests inclusivity (in contrast to the cross that indicates division and separation). Eastern philosophy leans towards integration through meditation on Unity.

We reach our goals with clear vision and a detailed plan

There is no ethical standard that remains untouched by time or geography, no absolute measure of goodness or truth. These are ideals rather than practical working models. Each of us grows towards the ideal that we ourselves choose, and develop competence in being what we aspire to become.

The scenes and scenarios that each day pass in front of our eyes stimulate in us an intellectual response, and it is helpful to employ these dramatised life situations as if they were mirrors reflecting back to us who we are and what we are doing.

It is we who write the manuscript for our own life drama. As directors we express our feelings about what we value and, as actors, we dramatise these feelings. A masterly actress is convincing because she is convinced; she gives herself, body and soul, profoundly, to her performance.

Yet, from time to time, it is wise to detach ourselves from our current involvements. We need to look again at the script and realistically examine whether we are keeping to it, lest we lose the plot. Against this plan we check how well we are doing by gazing into the mirror of life.

Personal control stems from clear vision focused by a specific detailed plan of intention. Without a disciplined goal, a person is as unlikely to reach safe harbour as a ship with no rudder.

True self-awareness requires us to consider ourselves through the eyes of others, and follow up our observations with a process of continual self-re-examination and adjustment. Learning to master situations overcomes self-limitation and our personal plans are thus coordinated within the greater design.

What arises out of this is a great deepening – when we learn to trust that life offers us much more than we have been able to imagine. However profound life may be in its scripted form, typically the deeper profundity of personal experience is reached by serendipity, when we go beyond into unscripted realms of spontaneity.

CANCER 17

THE GERM GROWS INTO KNOWLEDGE AND LIFE

(UNFOLDMENT)

RUDHYAR: UNFOLDMENT OF MULTILEVEL POTENTIALITIES ISSUING FROM AN ORIGINAL GERM

GROWTH

Everything living tends to grow, this is motivation to expand our situations and influence

As a seed breaks open to germinate, so a seeker breaks open the shell of ego. Each reaches towards the light, one physical, the other metaphorical yet both in obedience to the universal imperative in life - to grow. Although the seeker has meditated upon self-surrender into Unity, still they have an equal and opposite will to proclaim the uniqueness of self and project individuality forward.

Whatever we pretend to be is what we yearn to become

Within each person is a level of certainty – a core of immutable distinctiveness, which actually constitutes the self as such.

One characteristic of its being is the urge, and urgency, to become. We are all moved by an inner compulsion towards situations and encounters, through which we both expand, and refine, this essential identity. By opening ourselves up, we reach out to establish every possible phase of our self-existence, and claim it as an aspect of the eternal soul.

We are as much engaged in the presentation of self as we are in real development – and we need to be careful to avoid falsely assuming and presenting qualities that we have yet to master. Still, whatever we pretend to be is an important clue that tells us what we yearn to become. This is useful information.

What we realise is that we are the germ of an idea unfolding – and this idea, which grows into knowledge, is the experience of our life, as we grow in wisdom and awareness. To gain completeness of personal realisation we must give ourselves over to every moment and totally embrace each immediate concern.

Everything living shares this irresistible determination to press forward indefinitely and uncompromisingly. As much as we are pressing forward towards greater expression, so are others. And we co-create the details of our lives by marrying their visions with our own, and trying to perfect ourselves within these interactions.

Ancient esotericists, who spoke of the philosopher's stone, were working with this very concept. How can we turn lead into gold? In other words, how can we reclaim our spiritual glory when we are imprisoned in clay?

And perhaps the best answer is – slowly, inevitably and repeatedly throughout eternity.

CANCER 18

HEN SCRATCHING FOR HER CHICKS

(PROVISION)

RUDHYAR: A HEN SCRATCHING THE GROUND TO FIND NOURISHMENT FOR HER PROGENY

GROWING UP

We must accept responsibility for self and others to find maturity

Growth in the plant and animal kingdoms is mostly measured in size; in the human realm it has to do with emotional and intellectual maturity - playing a responsible part in the community and fulfilling one's role properly. Whatever we seed must be attended to so that it develops into full expression, and this applies to our projects as well as our children.

Fulfilment comes from pursuing the right path persistently

Generally, when left to its own devices, life finds a way to protect us all. In this example the hen's instinct is to provide for her offspring until they are old enough to cope. Mothers are hard-wired to make sure their genes survive and prosper, thus the hen's nature protects the chicks.

There is, however, a general requirement that we exert ourselves in some way in order to have our own needs met. All life is kept going through exchange, and 'food for work' is the commonest formula.

Normally the reward for industriousness is sustenance – and often material abundance.

Peace of mind also follows, as long as the work we are doing is an authentic expression of who we are. Then it feels good to be doing it and finding higher achievement through it. Typically a deeply gratifying feeling is experienced when we have overcome challenges to become who we truly are.

In fact, we can say that self-fulfilment mostly depends on both finding the right life path, and pursuing it with real application and a significant degree of commitment – even doggedness.

In contrast, those who spend their life busy doing nothing are prohibited from feeling the sense of wellbeing that is so sought-after. Therefore, we need to learn discernment – between what is meaningful and self-consistent, and what is mere bustle.

We find ourselves well equipped to turn every occurrence to our advantage, we then become able consistently to provide ourselves and others with what is needed.

CANCER 19

A PRIEST PERFORMING A MARRIAGE CEREMONY

(CONFORMITY)

RUDHYAR: A PRIEST PERFORMING A MARRIAGE CEREMONY

SANCTIFYING A CODE OF CONDUCT

Belonging to a community carries duties emphasised by religious protocol and ritual

Some of our activities and projects are entirely for personal satisfaction and have no great social implication. Others are sanctioned and sometimes sanctified by the rituals that define our particular social group. There are rites, rites of passage, ceremonies and celebrations, which can be religious, cultural or even commercial, that collectively bind us into our own community in its widest sense. They serve to give greater meaning to what we do by integrating us into the larger context.

Civilization promotes conformity to bring all facets of life into alignment

Before civilization began to take shape, there were no priests, no ceremonies and no contracts for sexual relations. Civilization is that which promotes conformity – and it can create bondage, and deny individuality. It is structured by laws and moral codes, backed up by penalties enforced by power-possessors.

These structures form the body of something else, which is much more subtle – the core ideals that define and describe those who adhere to them. Our racial and cultural identity express through these structures, and actually arise from them.

The rewards are found to be plentiful for the adherents. There are great advantages to be part of something, especially in knowing that others are willing to conform to principles and aspirations that we ourselves are bound to. As a result we find friendship, family and economic wellbeing easier to establish.

A special kind of self-fulfillment is possible if we align in service to the established rituals of our society. The priest's submission is one example. Perhaps in the beginning the surrender – in service to the rituals – was meaningful because of the beliefs they represented, yet later rituals were employed as a means to perfect the surrendering itself.

The constant repetition of ritual has a very profound effect upon the adherent. The mind becomes very clear, and, so does the body of emotion. We can become very capable of enacting the current aspirations of those we serve – in other words, we become powerful.

The very need for the existence of priesthood points to an inability, within the general population, adequately to attend to the more spiritual side of life. The priest takes on the spiritual stewardship of human society out of concern for its integrity, knowing that individuals will not do this themselves – and are better able to project their most subtle qualities onto another person such as a priest.

This empowers the priest. If dealt with properly, there can be the possibility of bringing all the many facets of life into organic alignment – otherwise the church can become an all-powerful ruler that corrupts the community's highest aspect. But as we internalise and embody the values that the priest proclaims, we reduce dependency upon external authority. If we live by our own code then we have no need to use someone else's.

CANCER 20

GONDOLIERS IN A SERENADE

(SENTIMENT)

RUDHYAR: VENETIAN GONDOLIERS GIVING A SERENADE

CELEBRATION OF PERMITTED EMOTIONS

Society rewards and punishes certain behaviours and romance is approved and supported

Even the normal palette of emotional expression is ritualised - for example in courtship protocols - and, for the most part, we find happiness when we are able to conform with accepted ways to live out our feelings. The light-heartedness that arises when we do is often festive

The mind becomes clear when the heart is at ease

The division of labour in society allows that each individual can find their own work, even underwriting the rather fanciful occupation of a gondolier. Some arrange for food to be on the table, others create serenades.

Personal traits, sentiments, desires and preferences, will only be perfected when an individual is ready and willing to seek satisfaction in every moment, doing whatever work they are drawn to do, and enthusiastically accepting the resultant life-path.

Although sentimentality, especially when taken to extreme levels, is unlikely to touch the deepest reaches of heart, it is nevertheless soft, and has an easing effect, which can engender harmony.

Through this gentle process of creating coherence, the expanding self is able to face up to external challenges, and inner ambiguities, with greater courage. When the heart is at ease, the mind becomes clearer, and our tasks become simpler.

The soul hungers for the perfection of love, which is so often sought in romance, where imagination is exalted. Music is an excellent metaphor to hint at the human potential to find a symphony within cooperative relationships.

There is no merit in taking this idea to a position of extreme unworldliness – it is tantamount to a retreat from, even a betrayal of, self. Sentiments are to grace hard reality, not to replace it.

The music of life flows through us at all times, and gets us to dance to its tune. The only legitimate response to this is enthusiasm and full-on participation with the self as it expresses itself.

CANCER 21 – 25

LEADERSHIP

Whereas 'fame and fortune' is the most worshipped of gods, it is a false god and leads us off the path of joy. Trusting that we can passively but intentionally draw into our lives that which fulfils the soul's purpose, we begin to integrate the various aspects of self into a unified whole, and this creates a resonance at a higher vibration of magnetism and, through the strength of faith alone, causes us to become leaders of our circle of influence.

Whereas the more outgoing type of individual will lead by calling others to follow, there is another strategy, which we associate with the more responsive type. This leader, having perfected various softer skills and intelligent insights, knows how to wait. A time will come and they will be awakened to respond to an inner feeling that their destiny is to serve the tribe by guiding it through difficult times. A wide knowledge of the ability of others, coupled with the means to inspire and persuade, expands the resources available to the leader. Added to this is an easy intuitive sense of which of the possible options is likelier to produce the better community result. The influence of this type of captain depends upon popularity and empathy – they need to be seen as truly representative of the underlying feelings of the group at large, in keeping with the times and codes of the community.

CANCER 21

A PRIMA DONNA SINGING

(EXCELLENCE)

RUDHYAR: A FAMOUS SINGER IS PROVING HER VIRTUOSITY DURING AN OPERATIC PERFORMANCE

THE PRICE OF SUCCESS

Despite huge social cost, our attainments almost never produce yearned-for happiness

The pursuit of fame and fortune is so commonplace that it forms the core motivation for the majority of people, and our cultural ideas of what is successful is mostly shaped by the measurement of financial wealth or wide social popularity. Rarely does a person enquire of themselves at what price was such success purchased.

Only when we are aspiring to excellence can we feel alignment with the soul

It's very interesting that this image has become so ambiguous, in that the phrase *prima donna* is often used facetiously to point to a person's unseemly display of superficial self-affirmation. One interpretation of the original meaning is that someone has persistently and rigorously sought perfection in order to improve themselves, and to project their best into the world.

We cannot truly rise to the highest potential version of ourselves without ardent self-improvement, through which our skills and talents are perfected to the level of excellence. The soul's constant, recurrent rediscovery of itself requires this process of perfecting – and we can feel ourselves aligning with soul only when we are aspiring to excellence.

From this we can infer that excellence is a soul quality – a spiritual practice. The medium that stimulates the expression of soul – in this case singing – tends to vary from place to place and over time, according to currently popular human values.

We can use this as a way to generate sufficient incentive to progress. Our best creativity is encouraged by the popularity received when we tune in to the zeitgeist sensitively enough to become generally favoured. The resultant quality and quantity of attention that flows towards us empowers our efforts.

We all have opportunity to excel at something, but very few fulfil their potential. It is the culmination of several things – aptitude, vision, imagination, effort and opportunity for example – and we need to respect the need for all of them.

Seeing this from the other side – the audience is enabled in an important way. We benefit from being able to live out our dream vicariously – just losing self-limitation in the moment by 'becoming' the *prima donna* on stage ourselves.

This can awaken and stimulate into reality an overflowing richness of self in full command of our own deep and genuine potentials. By pretending to be the celebrity, we are likelier to become the same as her – or at least similar.

CANCER 22

WOMAN AWAITING A SAILBOAT

(EQUANIMITY)

RUDHYAR: A YOUNG WOMAN AWAITING A SAILBOAT

UNCERTAIN EXPECTANCY

Our dreams may come true and yet they may not; we must come to terms with that

Whereas ambition is typically shown as being pushing and rather masculine, another way to draw events and relationships to us is through the more feminine attitude of hopeful expectation. The tendency of this approach is to focus more on qualities - love, harmony, beauty perhaps - than scenarios and measurement. It is a more soulful, dreamlike vision that is imagined and attracted.

Silence brings deeper perspectives

When we know how to access the power of the human soul, we gain immeasurably in all realms. This facility so often shows itself as equanimity, a creative poise that engenders a wider, deeper perspective on life that settles easily on those who have learned the mysteries of silence.

Through quieting the mind that we come to notice the little things that bring us to a full appraisal of what is now occurring. It is one of humanity's true gifts – the ability to sustain profound interest in the immediate moment.

The drift of circumstances offers ever-changing versions of reality, each moment having its own potentialities of meaning. It is the quiet mind that grasps the significance of the moment and thus formulates an impression of the underlying pattern that gives rise to seemingly chance events. This is Yin power and is developed through the art and practice of creative expectancy. By meditation, we train ourselves to see more clearly what is occurring, and this gives insight about the underlying flow – from past, through now, to future. We see how an idea is born, has hopes and moves to fulfil itself.

Thus we see and understand that the ideas themselves have a life, a life expectancy, and an expectancy of parenthood. From one idea, others are born, which in turn initiates more and more creative expressions of life's unending potentiality. In each moment, with poise, we can get a sense of where this reproductive process might lead. Optimistically, we look to the future, as if looking out to sea, wondering when our ship will come in. If we have perfected the high spiritual skill of detached, expectant enthusiasm, then probably we will see many ships from exotic shores, all homeward bound.

This is the most satisfying way to understand the movement in our lives. We come to comprehend that it is not the pyramiding of facts upon one another that gives meaning to our involvements; it is the consummation of ideas. The quiet mind is the sponsor of beautiful ideas, which yearn for completion in the realm of real life.

Perhaps we can make the association – that the ability to gaze deeply into the present awakens our sensitivity to the future's echo in today's events. This grants access to as-yet-undisclosed certainties and possibilities.

There is an implicit warning here – that the opposite is true. Without spiritual poise, we can become unrealistically casual and easily waste the moment, remaining in facile dependence upon nothing but the whims and fancies of happenchance.

CANCER 23

MEETING OF A LITERARY SOCIETY

(CRITICISM)

RUDHYAR: THE MEETING OF A LITERARY SOCIETY

ARTISTIC INFLUENCE

Artists are both observers and co-creators of the soulful realities

The category of people whose function is to ponder the more subtle aspects of society is the artistic, poetic, musical and sensitive types. These folk attempt to understand society's emotional framework and hidden atmosphere well enough to capture and express its essence; they work most through metaphor and imagery.

Personal identity is invigorated as it responds to examination

A literary society shows an example of the practice of criticism as a positive method by which to gain heightened awareness – through which improvements and deeper appreciation occur. Applied to the character of a self-aware individual, criticism reinforces the definition of personal identity.

With this intellectual approach to life there are two obvious possibilities to consider. There is the potential to make day to day life more rewarding through developing a real understanding that expands our range of interests. Yet also the temptation is strong to use debate and discussion as a substitute for full participation in reality itself.

Generally, accomplishment follows the exacting assessment of the features of ordinary activities and common effort – we need to see what works in the world, and we do this by looking very carefully at the details. This attitude sponsors self-reflection, and helps us to review our own aesthetic and intellectual characteristics, as a procedure for improving them.

We grow in stature by accepting the need to hear and take on the observations that are made about us, some of which feel threatening to our self-love. Criticism offered by another is impotent – even counterproductive – unless we accept it as valid. Self-criticism and self-improvement are very intimately connected activities.

It is a glorious aspect of humanity's range of qualities that we constantly develop new and imaginative ways to express ourselves. In this, there is no end to our collective resourcefulness. Whereas repeating and copying are appropriate methods to gain knowledge and experience, in the final analysis it is only originality that has cosmic importance.

Moreover, whenever we are innovative, we stimulate others to be the same way. There is a resonance of original, imaginative optimism that raises those we meet and humanity generally.

With this attitude to even the simplest situations in life, our response to circumstances somehow tends towards a widening of opportunity and the recognition of greatness in others. As a result we become worthy of the high opinion that is eventually accorded us – by a community that is appreciative of our positivity.

CANCER 24

WOMAN AND TWO MEN ON SUNLIT LAND FACING SOUTH

(INCEPTION)

RUDHYAR: A WOMAN AND TWO MEN CASTAWAYS ON A SMALL ISLAND OF THE SOUTH SEAS

HARMONISATION

Harmony occurs only when we reconcile intellectual, emotional and spiritual realities

The emotional, mental and spiritual aspects of personality need to be held in harmonious accord if there is to be sustainable, balanced joy throughput life. In each moment a new reality is emerging, and for us to create the best outcome we have to bring these forces of our being into blended interdependent relationship, then in turn our relationships with people will blend into harmony.

We are the creative source of our situations, rather than subject to them

The key idea here is inception – we have to be the source of our situations, rather than subject to them. This requires us to train the mind to know how to resolve ambiguity without allowing ourselves to become slaves to the false freedom of over-abundance. Enough is a feast; too much overwhelms us.

Having two men, the woman has neither, not both – showing how any inability to make decisions keeps us from the truth of who we are and what our purpose is. This image points to the need for us to take steps to further our involvements. Sunbathing is temporarily an appropriate indulgence of ineffectiveness – time out – and yet if it becomes prolonged, it gives us a very strange sense of reality.

A balance must be struck – between allocating attention towards our deeper purposes, and dealing with immediate, but transient, needs and pleasures.

Even on a day-to-day basis, we are presented with impactful options, and we have to bring our sincere values to bear in all we do, however seemingly trivial.

Our basis of life – the very basics of being who we are – depends upon the allegiances we form, and our series of decisions. If we behave reliably and consistently according to our value system, then we will deepen our involvements and strengthen the character.

Inevitably this is helped if we have a greater plan – a large scale overall goal for our lives. This brings all and everything into one cohesive pattern, which enables us to resolve every issue of choice more easily.

It may appear that we constrain ourselves unduly when we choose always to conform to the big plan in all the little things – but this is a false reading. There are simply too many choices to make and, without criteria, we become overwhelmed, and actually inept. We have to discipline ourselves, away from the ultimately unfulfilling '*see, want, have'* mentality.

CANCER 25

DARK SHADOW OR MANTLE THROWN SUDDENLY OVER RIGHT SHOULDER

(DESTINY)

RUDHYAR: A WILL-FULL MAN IS OVERSHADOWED BY A DESCENT OF SUPERIOR POWER

ENACTING THE SOUL'S PURPOSE

Aligning worldly aims with soul's essence-vibration, we feel blessed by divine dispensation

True success is an endowment. It may feel as though one is blessed by higher forces to carry out special cosmic purposes but in truth the 'benefactor' of this endowment is our higher self - which is accessed whenever all sides of personality are mastered and brought into harmony. The inevitable outcome of this process is that we become influential over those who have imbalances, so we are then able and inclined to guide those around us towards the realisation of a higher purpose.

We have to claim a commanding influence in order to grasp a situation and pull it around

The mantle of leadership is not given to many, and these few often feel a sense of destiny. The realisation occurs that we have the capacity for command – at exactly the moment when circumstances unfold that require us to come forward. On the inner level, we have to come to terms with the need to claim influence and perfect talents in order to grasp the situation and pull it around. We will be thwarted in the proper expression and development of our true potentiality unless we find the strength to resist the imposition of those who would try to tame us.

In fact, it is best for all concerned if we allow our width and depth of possibility to spread out, which then we can place in service to the general community. Whatever could be needs to be expressively released in order to become what is. We may well discover a specific talent that is vital to the general welfare.

Self-gratification and social integration through appropriate involvement have to be in alignment if we are to optimise our feelings of wellbeing and belonging. Selfishness doesn't lead to happiness, yet neither does reluctant self-sacrifice.

The temptation to become presumptuous is strong, and we need to observe honestly any inclinations we might have to bend towards the dark shadow of megalomania. This would diminish our effectiveness and defeat our spiritual purpose.

However, we are compelled, by our very existence, to step up and become who we are destined to be. This is not only for our personal rewards; it is actually the obligation of each person to participate irrevocably and fully in the reality of life around us.

In outer terms, we are revealing a willingness to accept stewardship of our group's progressive ambitions and accommodate all the myriad individual viewpoints that make up the social complex.

If it is our fate to lead, then there is very little that could thwart us – except perhaps our own silly self-deprecation or fear of the inevitable pressure that comes as par for the course.

CANCER 26 – 30

CONSOLIDATION

The interplay between the individual and their community is conducted as a creative tension, each side pulling and then giving way in turn, co-creating a society that must necessarily both limit and support free individual expression. The power-possessors will use their influence to protect their elite position, and yet forces of Nature and the spirit of humanity's rebelliousness are always going to challenge fixed positions. This process mirrors a similar one within each of us and we find that with age we tend to become less the rebel and more part of the consolidating authority that experience bestows.

There are quiet periods, when the weary will take their well-earned rest, and there are stormy times when emotions run high and life gets very intense. We human beings are strongly influenced by our passions and need to restrain ourselves from over-indulgences of all kinds, especially when personal or communal feelings are at high tide. Never too relaxed, never too tense – or there is real and significant danger that threatens the tribe. The indirect force that moderates these extremes of sentiment shows in various ways. These include fellow feeling and the willingness to see another's point of view – also a general loyalty to family and tribe, and faithfulness to its binding ideal.

Here we go beyond the earth-bound concerns of survival to the highly spiritual alignment that is capable of consolidating a disparate number of people into a unified whole. Eventually, by sharing day-to-day trials and celebrations over the years, we somehow become part of one another – in every sense, whether practical or spiritual. This is the goal of Cancer – to be an integral part of a higher organism, to belong legitimately to something held together by a level of rapport so deep that it is prayerful.

CANCER 26

CONTENTMENT AND HAPPINESS IN LUXURY

(REPOSE)

RUDHYAR: GUESTS ARE READING IN THE LIBRARY OF A LUXURIOUS HOME

SOCIAL STATUS

Becoming influential in society requires awareness of current trends of ideas and beliefs

Society is consolidated by the laws, moral codes and intellectual trends of the time, and these are shaped during gatherings at which the more influential members of the community socialise. To be a part of this set one must conform to its standards of behaviour and belief.

Relaxation is an important aspect of life

It is folly to try to maintain a constant force of self-projection by overdoing things so much that we strain beyond our strength.

Self-regulation is advised. The image of luxury, and the keyword Repose, give the clear message that it is important to see relaxation as a valid component of our life-management strategy.

Soft living, when taken to inappropriate levels, leads to loss of reality. Idleness and self-indulgence are not often helpful qualities; we know this.

Yet as long as it is practised in moderation, it actually sustains our aspirations to practise repose as an aspect of self-optimisation.

In fact, we can only achieve the capitalisation of personal potential when effort is properly balanced with relaxation. It is obvious, when we consider the eternal cycle of struggle and surrender, that neither idleness nor constant effort is sustainable alone.

When we find ourselves experiencing a lessening of personal responsibility, or more frequent displays of ineptitude, then we have a clue that it may be better to relax a while and regroup, marshalling our resources and energising.

Such a phase can be best seen as a prelude to a renewed effort, and through that, towards an even greater expansion of self.

CANCER 27

STORM IN A CANYON

(INTENSIFICATION)

RUDHYAR: A VIOLENT STORM IN A CANYON FILLED WITH EXPENSIVE HOMES

CRISIS LEADING TO TRANSFORMATION

Eventually life calls attention to the transient and shallow nature of luxuries

However seemingly settled society is and however secure its members might feel, nonetheless there are forces that cannot be tamed. Each person will be faced with circumstances beyond their control and inevitably go through transformative emotional turmoil.

Humanity has inherent power to overcome problems and create new ways forward

This image expresses how everything has an unassailable right to be itself. There is, within everything and everyone, an indomitable entitlement to be who and what we are, and therefore of consequence.

This is shown in the energy with which we preserve ourselves, and how we access and enlist every resource in life in order to express ourselves more fully.

With the purpose of having our values both identified and clarified, each one of us demands that our ideals are made manifest in some way – and, like the storm, we do not seek validation, or permission, before we allow our emotions and ideals to express themselves into the world.

Self-satisfaction does not support further development, and occasionally we need to be thoroughly shifted by external forces. Not only does the violence and terror of a storm serve to lift a person out of their complacency – it also stimulates the ability to rise in supremacy over each momentary crisis.

A storm becomes more intense in a canyon, as Nature unleashes its power very dramatically. This is in no way a greater expression of power than that inherent in humanity, in our ability and passion to create and overcome.

Circumstances have the capacity, even the tendency, to pyramid, as indeed does a thunderstorm as it gets increasingly threatening. During a life crisis, each new development shows what is happening internally as our passions rise.

It is inappropriate simply to enjoy the turmoil in a voyeuristic manner. These moments of intensification in life can be harnessed so as to impel us through periods of intractability into a new level of vitality.

CANCER 28

A MODERN POCAHONTAS

(COMPATIBILITY)

RUDHYAR: AN INDIAN GIRL INTRODUCES HER WHITE LOVER TO HER ASSEMBLED TRIBE

COUNTRY LIFE

The soul may not be able to withstand the stress of an ambitious life for long without cost

It is hardly surprising that humanity's survival instincts brought about the inclination to become civilised, to create social structures and limit the risks and discomfort of primitive living. Yet taken too far this process lifts people into a false world divorced from Nature, which actually is unsustainable. The return to Nature is a necessary re-balancing when we have lost touch with the Earth.

Life is change; we must find a way to adjust

It is foolish to dwell on the past and exalt the principles of conservatism. The past does not exist and its dreams did not survive. Life is change; we must find a way to adjust. Pocahontas won her place in history when she married a white American, the first recorded inter-racial marriage in the USA. Leaving her own people, she embraced the new world, and was held up as an example of the native culture from which she came. Finding a way to harmonise her past and her future, she stands as a symbol of compatibility.

New phases of human culture wash upon the shores of what seems crystallised as hard fact, eroding the very substance of reality. Shore and tide, essentially different, are eternally cooperating in the mystery of evolution by finding the rhythm of give and take.

It is true that values, hard-won and passed down from generation to generation, promote faithfulness and the bonding power of deep empathy that underpins the love of family, clan and homeland.

Yet these very values are established only by the interplay between old and new, as the frontier spirit of change breathes its life force into what otherwise would decay or become rigid.

The visionary soul is a pioneer, ever seeking to renew and perfect relationships between what was and what will be, as a means to expanding a greater depth and reach of self-realisation.

Every intimate contact is the frontier of human evolution, where old meets new, each convinced of its rights and power. The wise and skilful soul demonstrates its special facility of compatibility in such encounters, and so softens the friction of tide upon shore.

Old wisdom and its deeply-treasured beauty will thus be appropriately employed in service to contemporary needs, expressed by youth’s fresh vibrancy, its modern values and naive joyful fumblings.

CANCER 29

A MUSE WEIGHING TWINS

(VALUE)

RUDHYAR: A GREEK MUSE WEIGHING NEW-BORN TWINS IN GOLDEN SCALES

WEIGHING ALTERNATIVES

We must balance rational and non-rational wisdom to optimise our opportunities

Each moment remains uncommitted until a decision cuts away options and, when definitively analysed, we come to see that polarity of 'this or that' in everything. We live a life of choice between pairs of opposites - and whether and when we choose with mind, heart, body or soul is what determines who we become.

Knowledge and experience are the twin poles of existence

The twins, which the spirit of inspired wisdom is weighing, refer to the two complimentary parts of the self.

These have been identified, and related in modern psychology to the operation of the two sides of the brain. The right is more intuitive, the left more rational; the one leads us into situations, the other tries to understand them.

As we weigh our experiences to find their meaning with a balanced wisdom, we create a unique expression of selfhood. When this individuality is expressed in the world of senses it shows in personality, when expressed in the eternal reality it shows as our inner encounter with truth; it is reason.

Finding a way to reconcile these two is a necessary and sufficient condition for inner peace. If we are to establish authenticity and poise as we express our creative interpretation of the nature of reality then we must learn to value them both.

In fact, integrity of selfhood can only be achieved fully by one who focuses attention equally on each of them in an unending dynamic – now on one, now the other. Knowledge and experience are the twin poles of the unity of existence, each informing the other, motivating us to explore both inner and outer worlds.

Although there is merit approaching an idealised version of self, in either direction, it is neither helpful nor wholesome to indulge any inclination towards perfectionism.

True spiritual wisdom will never be reached by idealising any idea to the point of perfection. The truth is that idealism itself lies in the realm of theoretical spirituality, rather than sensory reality, and is therefore unavailable to a sensual being. And we are all sensual beings.

Understanding this confers remarkable powers of discriminative judgement – the ability to bring to conflict and contradiction the balance of wisdom. We are drawn unendingly into tests that examine how well we can demonstrate the depth and subtleties of our unique take on how life works. Wisdom itself will never grow without this unavoidable life process of trial and error – we are born to fail, to learn from our mistakes and to try again. Being unwilling to risk failure would cap our development and, equally, refusing to learn from our mistakes would limit the depth and richness of our life experiences. The muse is accessible to us whenever we are willing to tune in to this refined insight, and perhaps only then.

CANCER 30

DAUGHTER OF THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION

(INHERITANCE)

RUDHYAR: A DAUGHTER OF THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION

TRADITION

Conservative society has the function of holding on to what is excellent and special

One of the polarities arising in our life of choices is whether to be more revolutionary or more conservative. The one leads to seek change, the other often tends to glorify the past. To be rebellious is more youthful, discontented and restless, and when this energy has been fully expressed the tendency with age is to choose to consolidate and maintain the status quo.

Good leaders gently guide their community through evolutionary steps of change

Individuality arises within a setting, and we easily see that we inherit much of who and what we are from parental and cultural sources. This fact is evidence of the essentially conservative nature of life; it is more evolutionary than revolutionary. The symbol here is not the Revolution itself, but the long term inherited results of it, which accrue in small steps from generation to generation.

What marks a family or community is its proven ethics, and the members' adherence to them. Each of us is likely to be pleased with ourselves because of the differences that proclaim our uniqueness, and yet what comforts and motivates us on the primary level is the need to belong – for which we must substantively conform to inherited standards of behaviour and belief.

Our willingness to fit into a group, and its patterns of thought and activity, generates feelings of stability, dependability, warmth and trust – and most of us like them, and need them, enough to limit the degree of our absolute self-expression, so that our presence in the group is felt as empathic. This phenomenon of rapport allows for enduring relationships to occur in the formation of a heart-connected network.

Of course there is with this a real danger of stagnation and acceptance of the lowest common denominator, so we must not resist change. However conservative we may be, life is change and the absence of change is death. Peoples and people die off unless changes are embraced.

In order to act together as a unit, a group needs to be led – and thus we see that the act of unification necessarily throws up the need for leadership. The leader is better seen as a result of the group process rather than the cause. The purpose of the role is to infect the group with the inspiration to move collectively through the steps of change.

One who feels superior, whose agenda is more self-centred than it is in service to community needs, will be rejected sharply, as will any unsympathetic force or event that threatens to rupture the group's integrity and sense of wellbeing.

The very survival of a group requires the consolidation of, and allegiance to, its traditions – and its current, temporary leader has neither permission nor power to go against that.

LEO 1 – 5

COURAGE

Creativity is the primary activity of Creation, and the prime purpose of the Creator. It is enacted as an individual acts upon their own unique vision of how things could be. There is no greater force than this and it is concentrated by a creative person to the level of combustion - the transformative operation that breaks apart and pulls together the elements of life. It is dangerous and can spread uncontrollably like wildfire, yet we must engage with this force and if we are to be safe we must do so by taming our animal instinct. It helps to remember how awesome is the Original Source of this force.

It is a joy to reveal what we feel, what we think and what we have learned. By doing so we encourage others to do the same for themselves, so a mutually supportive atmosphere of communal improvement occurs. There is buoyancy associated with this, and all the forces of Nature conspire to validate the enterprises of those who trust in themselves enough to express who and what they are openly. As we thrive, so we look to find others to share with, and seek recognition for our attainments and character. A healthy individual, who has been raised and nurtured within a supportive family, will find no need to compromise in order to find their place, and fulfil their dreams – and it is central and essential to the human psyche to be courageously free of inhibitions, and to brim with individuality.

There are some dangers of over-reaching, yet this speaks of our enthusiastic, imaginative willingness to be involved in anything the desire-nature conjures up. The evolutionary expansion of self takes place at the edge of reason, a dangerous arena of uncertainty that calls us to risk comfort in order to win adventure. The risk cannot be managed well by using either intellect or feelings alone; both are needed in mutual empathy – our feelings need to be understood, our thoughts embodied, so that conscious spontaneity can direct our lives.

LEO 1

A CASE OF APOPLEXY

(IRRESISTIBILITY)

RUDHYAR: BLOOD RUSHES TO MAN'S HEAD AS VITAL ENERGIES ARE MOBILISED SPURRED BY AMBITION

FIERY LIFE-FORCE

An extreme level of emotional vitality requires extraordinary self-management

Although fire is a vitalising energy without which no life can exist, it is of course also very dangerous. On a psychological level the fire in the heart, which is exemplified by Leo as courage, confidence, enthusiasm and creativity, can also become dangerous if it 'goes to the head'. The danger is that the ego's self-love becomes overblown and unrealistic and in the extreme case if thwarted can give rise to red-faced uncontrolled, apoplectic anger. It requires great strength of character fully to embody the life-force in our personality without losing poise and perspective.

To enjoy life, we must risk death

Some people would rather die than give up their right to be exactly who they are. Apoplexy – a life threatening bleeding of internal organs – here symbolises the sense we can have that our very life-force would drain away if we did not express ourselves fully and immediately.

As adults, certain spontaneous child-like qualities tend to become less frequently seen, and one of them is the emphasis of continuity between being and doing. Identity needs to manifest unreservedly into behaviour for it to be real and realised.

There is something profoundly informative within this image. It suggests that we need to risk death in order truly to live. Rather than be thwarted in our desires, we would pay the highest price.

This impulsive quality is very empowering, and some will find it overwhelming. However, it can create a very stable personality that mobilises a great deal of personal potential.

Also, it is highly creative. Even in day to day expression, the various ways to be ourselves will decorate the circumstances of events and relationships in our life.

Naturally, if we want to maintain a good connection within our social group, we will need to moderate the tendency to be self-indulgent and impose upon others.

The wisdom is that when we resist nothing, we become irresistible. This means that a complete lack of inhibition can be a very successful life strategy.

LEO 2

AN EPIDEMIC OF MUMPS

(INFECTION)

RUDHYAR: AN EPIDEMIC OF THE MUMPS

WIDESPREAD IMPLICATIONS OF ANY EVENT

Anyone could begin an infectious idea; not all of them are appropriate for a community

Any imbalances that we suffer individually can all too easily spread outwards to affect people around us, and therefore in turn our total life experience. This is emphatically true when the individual is of childlike immaturity and cannot assimilate the life-force with appropriate restraint - particularity when sexuality is in play. This reminds us to be careful that we do not affect the world with our immature power-projections.

By sharing, we open ourselves up to whatever we may encounter

If we don't get mumps, then we'll certainly get some other infection. That is the threatening nature of life on earth, and we need to come to terms with that.

Yet without infection there cannot be osmosis, resonance or empathy. These are processes whereby one organism influences another and changes its very qualities. Whenever we reach out to share the best of another, we open ourselves up to the worst – whatever we may encounter.

In threatening moments when illness hits us, we could be seduced to find a momentary appeal in escapist ideas. This is not a positive approach, and may well bring unwanted results – self-pity usually does.

We are challenged to practise continual self-protection as the basis for our participation in current affairs. We are always in harm's way and even a moment's forgetfulness of this sharpening fact of life can cost us dear. It is our business to make sure we are not overwhelmed by the influence of others.

To further our aims we have to retain sensitivity, a passionate sensitivity, to what has practical importance to us when opportunity presents; yet we are vulnerable beings and need to take that awareness into our plans and strategies.

The indestructible spirit has to come to terms with the destructible body in order to approach self-perfection. Through the limitations of the physical body we come to learn of the other living spirits, and our own best approach towards involvement with them.

If we are not vigilant and forget to be truly alive to what we need in the immediate moment, especially when we go too far beyond our personal capacities, then things get out of hand, and we are at risk. Then there is a danger that we may choose to avoid reality and responsibility to retreat into a self-indulgent experience of our debilitating deficiencies.

LEO 3

WOMAN HAVING HER HAIR BOBBED

(DECISION)

RUDHYAR: MIDDLE-AGED WOMAN, LONG HAIR FLOWING AND IN A BRA-LESS YOUTHFUL GARMENT

REFUSAL TO CONFORM TO INAPPROPRIATE RULES

Some of society's constraints are life-denying to be resisted by those who claim freedom

There are good and necessary reasons why society imposes limitations on individual self-expression; it has to do so in order to protect itself from the fiery dangers of passion. Yet that must not stop us from finding a harmless way to express our nature, our desires and our sense of style, even if we become marginalised by doing so.

The goal in life is to experience the perfection of self-expression

The self is required to examine itself if it is to hone its uniqueness of being. In Sufism this process, considered of key importance for the disciple, is given the sacred name 'muhasaba', which can be translated as 'self-reckoning' or even 'accountability'.

The seemingly trivial decision about how to style our appearance is in fact a significant statement about the extent to which we conform or rebel. The evolution of society is evidenced by the waves of change in culture and fashion, which subtly indicate shifts in morality and levels of awareness. We need to choose our life path according to our degree of participation in these trends or indeed our challenges against them.

Adherence to popular, contemporary convention indicates compliance to the tides of collective values. However comfortable or comforting they may be, we need to be aware that we have our own values too, and that inadequate self-appreciation may well threaten the fulfilment of our personal destiny.

The goal in life is to experience the perfection of self-expression. To some significant extent this goal is well served by community compliance, yet we also need to strike out independently. This necessitates firm and clear decision – because to buck the trend is to question the status quo, and the sleeping masses become restless and agitated when their values are confronted.

Self-mobilisation through personal ambition is what enlarges personal significance, and this requires us to grasp opportunity early and decisively. It may be that, in our circle, it is our hair that is the first to be bobbed, and we become trendsetters.

The soul has no investment in the status quo – all external changes, minor or major, are of no real consequence – but on the inner level, even the smallest self-betrayal should be poignantly felt.

At this level of spirit, each individual remains entirely open to anything and everything. This knowledge, when fully understood and trusted, will empower all our choices, so that we can easily decide big and small questions with an easy heart. Indeed, it is by feeling what eases the heart that we need to make our decisions.

LEO 4

A MAN FORMALLY DRESSED AND A DEER WITH ITS HORNS FOLDED

(MORALE)

RUDHYAR: A MAN STANDS NEAR TROPHIES HE BROUGHT BACK FROM A HUNTING EXPEDITION

PROVING ONESELF

Demonstrating achievements and abilities has spiritual merit despite the high risk of pride

In the process of personal evolution, life's primary purpose, it is entirely necessary to come up against restraints and examination in order to prove - to ourselves and to others - that we have realised certain abilities and qualities. Such achievements are attained by overcoming our animal nature.

An assertive person is empowered by receiving the community's esteem

We can imagine a well-to-do man dressed just-so, back towards a fireplace in a wall emblazoned with the mounted deer head – feeling really good about himself and life generally. This is a person who makes an impact upon the world.

Also, this is one who knows how to play to the gallery. Clearly part of the enjoyment of success is the sharing of it by a somewhat public demonstration, in order to receive applause.

Morale is a power, and it requires that others approve of us and expect to see future attainments. We are able to demonstrate an exceptional capacity to attract the empowering esteem of our fellows only when we are willing to invest our sense of self-worth in a community validation.

Multiple achievements are evidenced by multiple trophies. By this is made known both our constant contribution to society and the essence of our finest qualities. More typically, some of us like to display cups and certificates on our bedroom walls.

There is a strong principle of self-assertion implied. This is further underlined by the dress-clothes – whose purpose is to impress and to claim both allegiance and authority, using the accepted tools of magic within our group. Business suits, posh cars and other glamours are techniques that bind the lesser into conformity with the greater; each enlisted into mutual service by their somewhat unconscious acceptance of the code.

There is a real danger of loss of self when these clever methods are used without awareness. We can become as dependent upon the accolade as a child who craves a pat on the head. Even wearing a suit is like presenting a trophy for the applause it automatically engenders, yet in fact it is truly the cloth that it is respected - not the wearer's essence but their ability to display prestige.

To some extent, we have to play the game, because that's how society works. But it is important to remember that it is a game – a game of obedience and reward, which, if we want to be free, we need to outgrow.

LEO 5

ROCK FORMATIONS AT THE EDGE OF A PRECIPICE

(ENDURANCE)

RUDHYAR: ROCK FORMATIONS TOWER OVER A DEEP CANYON

GEOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVE

Compared to Nature we are puny and momentary; self-importance must be reconsidered

Any sense we may have that we are powerful and special, though often helpful in our process of self-evolution, must be put into the context of what unfolds in geological time - the works of Nature. However young and vibrant we may feel within our own small world, we are insignificant within that greater, ageless expression of creative possibility.

To further our character we must come to terms with danger

Personality only achieves the rock formation of its enduring stability at the precipice of the risks it is willing to take. The very contours, that define who and what we are, are shaped by the prevailing forces of uncertainty in life.

We expand our reach only by taking on new experiences and their associated risks. There is something inherent in danger that opens up new perspectives of awareness within us, which in turn sponsor further creativity and enjoyment. Safety isn't much fun – do we really want it that much?

Each innocent and pleasurable encounter leads to something else – and events pyramid in their many ramifications to a crunch point and final outcome. These are the waves of life – we approach comfort and joy, become embroiled in crisis, gain satisfaction from resolution, and then there emerges yet another new opportunity for the enjoyment we gain from our involvements.

Reality is constructed in such a way that we are always eventually required to deal with something significant and life-threatening. We are occasionally forced to decide and act upon matters immediate and important.

In fact, it is the very nature of things that every single shift in orientation will, in time, become another crossroads demanding further self-definition.

Inevitably, to sustain ourselves in our very individuality requires that we respond unendingly to challenges that menace our comfortable enjoyment. This puts in doubt any strategy of seeking contentment and permanence as a life path.

There is no life trajectory without difficulty – nor would we really want one. Our ultimate aplomb and competency depend entirely upon overcoming trials and hazard, so we learn to withstand and, at least to a degree, to anticipate, resistance and attack.

LEO 6 – 10

IMPACT

Inevitably, unavoidably, society must evolve and must go through the stages of evolution - new becomes old, old is challenged by young, we project neediness upon false permanence, and yet what seems permanent is rattled and shaken by Shiva energy - the life-giving force of destruction seen in autumn and winter. Yet above all else we know that Creation itself has creativity as its essence-principle. There will always be a creative spark and it will always feel like the joy of a new day.

The 'push of the past' and the 'pull of the future' are equal and opposite forces that need to be creatively handled in order to optimise our happiness. If we feel content with the way things are, then we may need to exert influence to maintain the status quo; if things need to change then we need to expend energy in the direction we choose. Either way, we have impact upon what transpires. Indeed, we cannot fail to have impact simply by being alive, so we need to honour that gift of living by creating outcomes that not only reveal but proclaim who we are.

Wisdom guides us, and we are cautious not to surrender the known for the unknown too readily. Yet life has no meaning without involvement, and full participation in life is clear evidence of a confident soul thirsting for further experience. Vitality is of itself a healing force, so that all opportunities to engage may be passionately grasped without fear of exhaustion. There are rewards for making the most of past experience; we learn a lot by observing the cyclical course of events, and can manage to avoid the pitfalls a second time. The knowledge and skills that come from such careful concern provide the necessary equipment to use our influence to deal competently with whatever comes up.

LEO 6

AN OLD FASHIONED WOMAN AND AN UP-TO-DATE GIRL

(CONTRAST)

RUDHYAR: A CONSERVATIVE, OLD-FASHIONED LADY IS CONFRONTED BY A "HIPPIE" GIRL

IMPERMANENCE OF VALUES

What is important, moral or courteous changes quickly from one generation to the next

The mirroring within society, of personal growth, is to be seen as changing social values. These changes are cyclical and evolutionary, or even revolutionary. They express as style, as belief and so on, and it is almost always youth that confronts the conservative, older social leaders demanding change. And change in the end always comes, since nothing is permanent - not even our sense of right and wrong.

Awareness and wisdom arise through differentiation

The dynamic of life is provided by the constructive tension between opposites as they interact with friction. The old woman and young girl are always in contrast to each other, and yet their very competition is somehow cooperative. Each is somewhat defined by the other.

Conventionality and initiative are a continual stimulus to each other, as we see all around us in every aspect of everyday life, and all the roles in our society. The old woman tends to overemphasise her individual traits; the younger has a degree of psychological reticence, under-statement of self. The one holds alive and protects contributions of the past, the other administers the promise of the future.

As we see, it is the actual contrast between two contrary forces that brings with it greater awareness, and the resultant perfecting of wisdom into our ordinary lives.

Personal achievement is optimised through a creative appreciation and adaptation of the values established previously by others. The young girl's timid personality is made stronger by adapting to her current circumstances the understandings she inherits from the older woman. Each of us somehow has to accept the best of its wisdom even as we rebel against the status quo.

Projecting our own aspirations, we find ourselves simultaneously both emulating and rejecting our parents' values.

At a higher level of symbolism, we see that the soul and the ego are themselves a pair of contrasting polarised forces. The soul's eternal knowledge is both inspiring and threatening to the ego's need – to accommodate its lust for immediacy and pleasure, while pursuing some deeper meaning within life's mystery.

This is how we learn the dance of struggle and surrender – changing only what can be changed, and accepting all else.

LEO 7

THE CONSTELLATIONS IN THE SKY

(SURETY)

RUDHYAR: THE CONSTELLATIONS OF STARS SHINE BRILLIANTLY IN THE NIGHT SKY

PERMANENCE OF SPIRITUAL TRUTHS

Unchanging as stars, some basic truths underpin all systems of spiritual knowledge

Though intellectually we may grasp impermanence, emotionally we need stability, and yearn for permanence. We project this yearning onto whatever seems unassailable - sunrise, seasonal cycles and the position of stars - then we will try to give supra-human meanings to these cosmic phenomena. We have reason to contemplate that perhaps this is mutual and the Universe itself looks for its meaning in and through humanity?

Our assurance lies in the actuality of personal experience

The phrase '*as above, so below'* from Hermes Trismegistas indicates that everything in existence has its equivalence in physical matter. Whatever flights of fancy we entertain, we may depend upon the surety that in some way all reality takes form and that space and time will somehow produce the substance of what we dream.

The cosmos is beyond all limits and can respond fully to all questing of a creative mind and stars are not constraints – they have a valid role to inspire us further in the reach of our imagination.

As a tool of creativity, the mind is powerful, yet also dangerous – we can as easily imagine dragons as angels; if we passionately believe in them, they must take form. To focus desire without understanding and responsibility is careless abandon, achieving fruitless and irresponsible retreat into the mystery of personal musings.

It is necessary to centre our sense of reality in established fact if we are really to authenticate ourselves. The self is a very complex system and needs to be ordered correctly. Disorders of the mind, such as pessimism and confusion, are best settled in the physical realm.

Our assurance lies in personal experience – what are we actually experiencing now? All else is imagination, and lacks substance. The unknown and the unknowable are not the same thing. The constellations are there – it is a knowable fact – yet any attempt to allocate meaning to them takes us into the unknowable, the area of speculation, even fantasy. Such enquiry is fraught with the risk of escapism and silliness. If our journeying into the meaning of life's mysteries is ungrounded, we are in serious danger of loss of personal integrity.

The twin dangers are the two extremes – of idealism and mediocrity. We may lose our grasp on reality with fanciful, fairy-story beliefs; or miss opportunities to create joy by adopting a fearful, humdrum attitude to life. To find the wisdom of life's sparkle we must use what is real and present as a strong reliable baseline for a light-hearted journey of exploration into life's subtle mysteries. Without a realistic philosophy we drift an unsteered course and yet, with too much structured thought and too little expansive dreaming, we would lose the wonder.

We need to understand the difference between a serious quest for knowledge, and aimless wandering through the stars imputing meaning to their symbolism with a vague hope of discovering secrets. Reaching up to the stars is seductive – and yet so often is the thief of reasonableness. Life's truth is discovered here and now by acknowledging the facts of the matter. Facts give us confidence, guarantee our foundation and pledge the surety of who and what we are. Constellations exist; that's a fact. What that means to any individual is quite subjective.

LEO 8

A BOLSHEVIK PROPAGANDIST

(LEAVEN)

RUDHYAR: A COMMUNIST ACTIVIST SPREADING HIS REVOLUTIONARY IDEALS

ENTROPY

Nature is creative yet also has an impulse towards breakdown and release of energy

The functionality of change - life itself - is described by two opposing forces, each essential, neither more important. The one force, creativity, is matched with and married to the other, which is the force of chaos, of entropy, that which dissolves order itself when it has become outdated in its current form. In the social context this appears as unrest, movements that challenge authority and the status quo. Whether Bolshevik or hippie, violent protests occur and Order is shaken vigorously.

It is better to rise up than to deny the evolutionary thrust of our rebellious nature

Bolshevik values were high and noble, reflecting a people's need to assemble under the banner of their worthy crusade to end tyranny and raise the masses out of a hellish level of poverty and oppression. The people rose up for the people, stimulated by visionary propaganda.

Leaven, in this context, is something that makes a situation or mood less dire. When matters are heavy and dark, it is better to rise up than to die down. Even if we fail, the attempt itself is life-affirming and inevitably rattles the power-possessors into evolutionary amendments to the status quo.

Every aspect of cultural expression is subject to this process – from fashions in dress to ideas about sex and God – but the ones most frequently studied in the long term are to do with recurrent battles over social and political issues.

The rock-solid strength of our enduring nature has no choice but to have some impact upon history. Collectively, we are the agency through which comes the evolutionary thrust of our species – that which engineers and decorates the changes from age to age. Individually, we are in fact able to influence the characteristics of these changes more than we may think.

The ringleaders of any revolution are usually young and ardent, firebrands for justice. Their selfless expenditure of energy is a feature of the dynamic for change and passions run high because a new age is at hand.

Over the centuries this story has repeated everywhere, yet it never gets old. Human spirit is indomitable and demands freedom and justice. However, often the revolutionary attempt fails – or succeeds only to become the next generation's problem. Nevertheless we always respond to the rallying cry of another soul determined to share a vision of the world as a better place.

That this is so often little more than ineffectual ranting is ignored. Even if futile we would rather rail against a multitude of superficial and non-specific ills than deny our rebellious nature.

LEO 9

GLASS BLOWERS

(DEFTNESS)

RUDHYAR: GLASS BLOWERS SHAPE BEAUTIFUL VASES WITH THEIR CONTROLLED BREATHING

ELEMENTS OF BEAUTY

Creating something inspiring and beautiful involves passion and commitment

Wherever change is occurring - and it is everywhere and always - three things are present. Spirit, in other words the breath of life force is one; creative passion, the fire of enthusiasm is another; the third is material substance, the dregs of the old. Sand, fire and breath. Each of these elements, in correct dynamic balance must be applied if we are to create something beautiful and timely. Imagine being able to turn sand into beautiful glass!

Our truest art is to create a beautiful character

In order to find an enduring form to manifest the Divine, it usually takes skill and training. It shows the inventive genius of humanity that sand can be turned into beautiful glass objects.

What is demonstrated is not only the skill of an artisan, but also something of their ideals, given expression in their art. There is no better justification for the allocation of a lifetime's resources and effort than to create something of beauty.

To carry out the task requires heat – a symbol of living enthusiasm. We do what we love because we love it enthusiastically.

Without this quality it is a chore, whereas with it, nothing is too much trouble. It makes for an effective participation in everyday existence, and allows us to perfect deftness and become supremely skilful at what we do.

In this way we take the baser materials of life and, with our inexhaustibly creative dexterity, manipulate and improve them.

It is meaningful to extend the metaphor to ourselves, and consider – do we skillfully transform the baser elements of our lower nature into something fine of which we can be proud, or do we simply misuse these powers willfully, expediently distorting reality into something convenient but graceless?

On another level, the artisans are both the first and last representatives of their culture – its arts and crafts are equally first beginnings and final testimony of civilisation's sophistication.

LEO 10

EARLY MORNING DEW

(REJUVENATION)

RUDHYAR: EARLY MORNING DEW SPARKLES AS SUNLIGHT FLOODS THE FIELD

METAMORPHOSIS

Reformulation of self into a better, lighter expression of being

The darkness of a cold night is symbolic of our troubles and suffering; yet always comes the dawn bringing its hope and fortifying the spirit. We have no choice but to engage with the trials and tribulations, yet with faith we will remember that sunrise always comes, and it brings with it a new day, a new way, potentially a feeling of optimism and joy. We can choose to focus our attention on the night's terrors or dawn's promise and all that we become arises from this choice.

Delighting in every moment is the cause, not the result, of success

Whenever we overcome our tendency to accept personal limitation and procrastinate, we are supported by Nature's gift of perpetual rejuvenation.

The real gifts of life are ever abundant and all around us in every moment – as long as we keep alert and notice things, especially unexpected occurrences.

An important life lesson, which allows a breakthrough to another dimension of contentment, is that we can relax and trust in the beneficence of Nature. All of our right choices are endorsed.

The image speaks to us of the continually surprising fillip we enjoy when life's optimism reveals itself to us – in a fresh dawn, a spring day, or a rainbow – and we become excited by an event we have witnessed a thousand times before. Every one of our basic experiences is recurrent and the deep wisdom contained within them can sometimes reveal itself in quite unexpected ways. The morning dew is more than a phenomenon of pressure and temperature; it has a magical quality.

This quality underpins our expectation of success; our goals are sponsored by our feelings, and our feelings are more optimistic when we are refreshed by Nature's wonders.

The greatest danger of life is that we lose sight of who we are and what truly outstanding accomplishments are at our fingertips. Every sunrise, and every conscious inhalation, is there to remind us that we are existentially magnificent – just by being alive, we achieve glory.

We have a talent, a very special talent, to find the better aspect of any situation. Even when threatened by disaster we can choose to access the optimism and confidence that we feel on a brisk sunny morning.

LEO 11 – 15

GENEROSITY

It takes time to mature. Our childlike urges to be free and easy come up against society and its demands that we restrict our spontaneity and develop social skills. Not until we have found the calmness and poise that so often comes with old age do we genuinely realise that it is foolish to curtail soul-expression in order to fit in with others. The recognition allows for the possibility as experienced, culturally-aware adult to reconnect with the innocent enthusiasm associated with youth. Such a combination can make us very influential.

Some of us are lucky enough to come to understand that success itself is a personal quality, one which grows the more it is trusted. This is true of all qualities, and illustrates the mystery of how to live well. Our open-handedness and open-heartedness are naturally expressed aspects of who we are, and they lead to a pleasing reciprocity. As we show our easy generosity of spirit, so we attract abundance, kindness and gentleness of disposition in the people we meet; we are treated well because we treat others well.

LEO 11

CHILDREN ON A SWING IN A HUGE OAK TREE

(DELIGHT)

RUDHYAR: CHILDREN PLAY ON A SWING HANGING FROM THE BRANCHES OF A HUGE OAK TREE

CHILDLIKE JOY OF DISCOVERY

One great joy in life is the exuberance felt when life's deeper sense of mystery is revealed

Typically, as the seeker discovers new aspects of the 'Great Revelation' there occurs a release of emotional excitement, rather naive and even childlike. In essence the soul is rather like this, innocent and freely expressive, so it often bursts spontaneously into new facets of life as such discoveries emerge.

Life is delightful when we do only what pleases us and give fully from the heart

These children have no purpose to serve or please others, no intention to improve themselves or their environment, and so no fear of danger or authority. Their single focus is to find joy in the immediacy of their own personal reality.

Nevertheless, they learn. They learn about the nature of physical life and of their emotional life too. Our conception of all and everything expands with each and every experience – not excluding those that delight us, in fact probably especially through those.

It is entirely appropriate, actually exemplary, to maintain zest and vigour in all physical and social involvements in every phase of life. When we are always enthusiastic, then we are generous in our self-expenditure. We give often and fully from the heart.

We find that such enthusiasm is only ever sustainable when we do only what pleases us. This is an important realisation that can go against the grain of what is expected in adulthood.

However, there is much to be said for the quality of dependability that follows this course of behaviour. People can trust that we will only ever do what we find satisfying – and, if at all possible, refuse all else.

There is always the risk of raising laziness up as an exalted value – so, to follow this life-path, means that we need to take a very high level of personal, even social, responsibility – as if to validate our self-centredness.

Yet surely life is meant to be a delight? Surely there is no better way to demonstrate our awareness of this wisdom than to do only what we love? Surely it is beneficial for us to accept this is so, as children do, taking for granted their right to enjoy each moment regardless of what else is happening in the world?

LEO 12

AN EVENING LAWN PARTY

(COMPANIONSHIP)

RUDHYAR: AN EVENING PARTY OF ADULTS ON A LAWN ILLUMINED BY FANCY LANTERNS

SOCIAL NICETIES

Shallow social courtesies become necessary when we attend community-centred events

Immersion in society can easily rob the soul of its innocence, which is replaced with the sophistication of adult personality as people attempt to survive and prosper within the superficial world of half-truths and guarded reputations.

Our companionship contributes to the community that supports us

The individual is always in relationship with the community and each requires the other in order even to exist. A part of each of us is nothing more than another replication of a well-established configuration of biological and psychological variations on a theme, aspects of the community that hosts us. However, another part, called the personality, is distinct and unique.

As children we have little awareness of personality – this has to be developed by wide interaction. The basics of our uniqueness are discovered in the superficial everyday contact we have within the daily round, and also at special occasions like parties, where companionship is celebrated.

With such companionship we are witnessed, and recognised for our worthwhile contribution – by which we become involved and enhance our individuality through the experiences this offers.

Unless our achievements are recognised as useful, then they are meaningless in any objective sense.

Genuine social maturity is measured by our ability and effective capacity to join in. We need to align our own sense of things with others' and cooperate in the building of a shared future.

The alternative is to show a lack of appreciation for life's reality, and to live in a rather narcissistic personal world that is little more than self-obsessed fantasy.

This wisdom is not meant to constrain the expression of personality – whose scope is indeed limitless. However, there must be context for there to be form, and there must be form for there to be reality.

LEO 13

OLD SEA CAPTAIN ROCKING

(RETROSPECT)

RUDHYAR: AN OLD SEA CAPTAIN ROCKING HIMSELF ON THE PORCH OF HIS COTTAGE

PEACEFUL CONTEMPLATION

The lessons and messages of life are complex and we gain from reflection and assimilation

In time, the child's innocence and the adult's sophistication give way to the peaceful realty of old age, a time to contemplate our personal history and the ups and downs that punctuate all life journeys.

By contemplating the past we add value to the future

The warning given by this image of a potentially impotent has-been is not to live in the past. If we surrendered to nostalgia, we would lose touch with the realities of our current circumstances, which are equally valid – in fact infinitely more valid than what no longer exists.

Yet in his memory, our Sea Captain fights his battles over and over – and thus gains greater mastery over the world since, through retrospective contemplation, he develops a much better understanding of the implications of strategy, cause and effect.

In any moment, there are people and things in relationship to us and each other, and our task is to bring them into an elegant, productive, unified whole. We use the same technique – we need to think about what has happened before in order to gauge what might happen next.

This enables us to optimise our degree of competence by fully grasping any latent opportunity. We tend to love reliving our best experiences through the agency of selective memory. This indicates which of them we give special value – and that is how we know what we appreciate most of all.

Only by the realisation of inevitable consequences can we learn to perfect our plans for successful outcomes. Although retrospect is backward looking, the way we process this activity can enable prospect – or forward looking. We can see certain key aspects of new situations in advance.

Events tend to repeat themselves and we can obtain some measure of control over the future by managing our knowledge of what happened before. They say hindsight is 20:20 vision; it is rarely true. We have received feedback and we need to employ it wisely.

The wisdom here is that each of us can call up fresh powers through what we have gained through experience, and the struggles we overcame in our journey towards self-fulfilment. Previous moments were similar to now in crucial ways, and it is only the child or the fool who does nothing to improve their chances by careful contemplation of them.

LEO 14

THE HUMAN SOUL AWAITING OPPORTUNITY FOR EXPRESSION

(INGENUOUSNESS)

RUDHYAR: A HUMAN SOUL SEEKING OPPORTUNITIES FOR OUTWARD MANIFESTATION

SOUL EXPRESSION

Eventually we learn to let the soul speak out freely

Upon reflection perhaps at last we learn from experience that the smoothest and safest course to take through life is the one that truly and immediately allows complete soul expression.

It is more natural to trust than to fear

At the level of soul, each one of us has an instinct for absolute wholeheartedness of participation in the everyday adventures of personality, provided that we approach life without strategy – with ingenuousness. For the soul, it is more natural to trust than to fear, therefore when we are in soul consciousness the magic of synergy and synchronicity more readily arises, so spontaneity is supported and rewarded.

We are not then limited by prejudice or other fear-based constraints upon our freedom of creative expression. This image is of the totally unconditioned self at its point of greatest potential – the entrance into a new complex of activity with fellows.

When we fail to engage fully with new circumstances and events, showing a lack of all genuine interest or enthusiasm, this is nothing but fearful procrastination and denial. Young children do not contemplate whether to pick up a colourful toy, they have no censorship to diminish enthusiastic immediate participation in life in response to new opportunities.

The refinement of character is made possible by the process of trial and error – so making mistakes forms an essential part of evolutionary process, and we should not shy away from the risk. And what exactly is at risk? Often nothing more than the discomfort of seeing that our investment in a false aspect of the ego has to be reviewed.

Our natural and normal expectations are typically met by life with approval. And though we may not always get it right first time, our innocent attempts to embrace life fully will always lead eventually to success of some kind. It may possibly be that that success is measured in terms of learning what does not work well for us. There is a considerable advantage in knowing what not to do.

Potentially we can awaken each one of our interests and talents. As individual aspirations unfold into the circumstances of our lives, we need to become aware of momentary nuances – small shifts in the field of what becomes available to us. These are often so subtle that we cannot actually detect them with the thinking mind, whereas if we are ingenuous there is a hidden aspect of our awareness that can detect and, at first unconsciously perhaps, respond appropriately.

This is not so much meant as a philosophy, but more as a disposition. The childlike enthusiasm we sometimes feel gives a clue as to the type of situations that are good for us to explore and embrace.

LEO 15

A PAGEANT

(DEMONSTRATION)

RUDHYAR: A PAGEANT, WITH SPECTACULAR FLOATS, IN A STREET CROWDED WITH CHEERING PEOPLE

DRAMA

Aspects of our true nature can only be released and expressed in a ritual setting

With mastery of careful planning that old age understands as expedient, and the spontaneity that youth knows to be joyful, a public demonstration of one's spiritual station can be shown. The soul and personality together in accord create the possibility of such power as can sway multitudes - especially when applied to the dramatisation of collective values.

Revelation is the creation of treasure

We take a pride in ourselves, and this very normal feeling is often satisfied by ordinary, everyday events. We tend to surrender to an irresistible urge to heighten the significance of self – across the whole face of human experience, even through public display.

We yearn to reveal what we are, because that – at least according to Sufis – is the essence-motivation for all existence. '*I was a hidden treasure and yearned to be known'* – God's first impulse that gave rise to Creation. To demonstrate our God-selves at a pageant raises this impulse to a high level.

There is magic in this. As each person individually shows who they are and what they can do, there develops the powerfully binding and creative force of fellowship – from which flows work for the common good.

Also, as we make ourselves known, we come to know ourselves. Revelation is in itself a creative and growthful occurrence.

Accomplishments that require collective effort enable everyone to participate in achievements well beyond their individual capacity, and each small contribution is valuable – and yearns to be recognised as such.

Some people lose poise however, and make unconvincing claims and embarrassing self-assertion. Generally, though, these are kept in check by group responses. Normally, it is a tricky business to know what to demonstrate and what to hide – because we don't like to feel foolish and we don't want to go unrecognised either. This is why pageants are so useful, because we have permission to show off a little, and relax our guarded self-denial.

All in all it is much healthier for a child to be encouraged to enjoy the delights of exhibition – and this carries forward into adulthood as the pride we feel when the fruits of our achievements are noticed. It sponsors excellence as well as the various supportive roles – through which everyone participates, even as spectators.

LEO 16 – 20

STRAIGHT-FORWARDNESS

Leo has to come to terms with its own power, the creative power that is analogous to the Sun itself. At times the force of combustion is required and appropriate; at other times these potentially dangerous energies need to find release rather than application. A five-fold process is suggested for this release. After any storm there is always access to the freshness of a new opportunity, we then need to tune in deeply to others in sacredness and bring old knowledge to bear upon new challenges without feeling any need to conform or limit our self-expression. We then find that the power of combustion can be equally relevant when applied in devotional release to a higher ideal.

When the appropriate cause, and its time, is upon us, then we act with fullness, and we inspire others to rally round. We love to participate in shared events, and this exuberance has a profoundly warming effect upon others – so that it lifts the mood, and sponsors greater collective accomplishment. All around us we find others with whom we engage, and these co-participants in our adventures form the community to which we offer loyal allegiance and enthusiastic sponsorship. We readily acknowledge the mutual benefits between self and community. One rewarding outcome – of such an energetic directness and broad interaction with life – is that hidden knowledge is somehow revealed. What are seen as mysteries to some become working principles to us and we can piece together the secret mechanisms, which govern us all, into a comprehensible map of the nature of reality. Then it falls to us to help others understand; we take up the influential position of teacher and guide, thus inspiring others to deepen their own involvements with life and all its mysteries.

LEO 16

SUNRISE JUST AFTER A STORM

(RECOVERY)

RUDHYAR: THE STORM ENDED, ALL NATURE REJOICES IN BRILLIANT SUNSHINE

NEW BEGINNINGS

There is always sunshine after rain and dawn after a dark night

From time to time, neither rarely nor often, the various ambiguities of our life come up against each other; clashing and banging occurs, a storm that has been brewing finds full expression and we find ourselves in crisis. Beyond that period of confusion and pain there is always a new beginning and it feels delightful and filled with joy and hope.

Storms are occasions to unclog our lives, an agency of renewal and revival

It is by no means easy or straightforward to destroy or even significantly diminish a person. Each of us has tremendous resilience and the power to bounce back. Indeed the strengthening process of setback and recovery is what enables self repeatedly to re-grasp itself.

This ability is much more to do with psychological strength than physical. Our inner orientation is what matters most of all – basically are we negative or positive in our general outlook?

The values by which we live endure. No matter what befalls us, certain principles and preferences constantly reassert themselves and prove faithful as measures and descriptive characteristics of our core identity.

Storms arise. Each major life issue can present itself as a turbulent period of emotional instability, a threat to our sense of secure wellbeing and a reduced degree of confidence in the future. But they pass, and the sunrise speaks to us of both the reliability of life and our unassailable powers of recovery.

The optimist sees the storms as opportunities to clear away the dross of our lives and as an agency towards reconstruction. Everyday stress and strain are employed as resources that sponsor the change process and enable us to enlist certain elements of our experience into some new effort or fresh approach.

So, rather than getting upset over petty things, we use our troubles as entirely necessary means to an end. It is through them alone that we awaken our fullest powers of recuperation. The resultant stability of character inspires others to trust in us, mainly because we trust ourselves.

Because we know we will always recover, we have no fear of the future, nor therefore the present. This faith in the inevitable return of things to their essential nature and is the foundation of exceptional steadiness of perspective. And since we accept everything with poise, fewer dramas occur and life can settle easily into a gentle, reliable rhythm.

LEO 17

A NON-VESTED CHURCH CHOIR

(COMMUNION)

RUDHYAR: A VOLUNTEER CHURCH CHOIR SINGING RELIGIOUS HYMNS

DEDICATION TO A COLLECTIVE IDEAL

Using the voice to create sacred harmony

However imperfectly administered by its current ruling bodies, religion represents an attempt by the community to find a deeper connection not only with their God but also with each other. The practice of devotional singing has great impact upon the individual as well as the community, in itself it can create the religious experience, which is not entirely different from the feeling of joy after the storm referred to previously.

The act of chanting is spiritual communion beyond self-surrender and self-proclamation

This symbol is of a choir, not in their robes but freely attired – ordinary people, joining together in the prayerful act of chanting in order to reach a state of spiritual communion.

We always seek to relate to others, and a lot of people strive rather unimaginatively for popularity. Others join in with a regimented social conformity with its enforced values and behaviour. Neither approach is passionate, neither truly authentic.

Communion however is beyond all self-surrender and self-proclamation. It is an effective quickening of a person's heart, through the development of shared interests, expanded to a point of real concern for their fellows. Because it speaks to the very highest in us, it connects us to all and everything, and of course every other person.

Thus reality is experienced and appreciated fully and profoundly – for its own sake rather than the illusion of projected ideals. Left to our own sense of reality, we are all too likely to invent something delusional; our depth of connectedness with others dissolves such delusions.

At this high level of spiritual consciousness, we are making a real contribution, by bringing ourselves into good order – to serve by fully participating in the broader functions of our community. Any common activity that coordinates group effort has this potential – sport, work or the village fete – yet chanting is more likely to revitalise our sense of sacredness – and sharing this is a powerful device to build long-lasting trust and involvement within a group setting.

Showing real respect for a person means that we have some awareness not only of their needs and opinions but also their relationship with sacredness. What we hold as sacred is of the greatest importance to us, so we need it to be recognised if we ourselves are to feel honoured.

Without this depth of interaction, everyday living remains shallow, and our sense of self and self-worth suffer a poverty of expression through the idle pursuit of unsatisfying, unimportant and isolating goals. Communion is the opposite; it delivers richness, significance and shared purpose.

LEO 18

A TEACHER OF CHEMISTRY

(INSTRUCTION)

RUDHYAR: A CHEMIST CONDUCTS AN EXPERIMENT FOR HIS STUDENTS

ABILITY TO TRANSFORM

We can learn techniques and policies to enable us to change our feelings and situations

Knowledge grows rather like a big old tree, having roots that go deep and branches that reach and spread. Anyone furthering an aspect of wisdom does so by continuing the chain of it, called silsila in Sufism, and they become an aspect of the transmission of its power. Knowledge is an energy-configuration and has the power, and in fact the purpose, to shift reality magically.

Learning and teaching life's operating principles must surely result in happiness

It is a rare person who comes to understand the workings of the world well enough to teach of its mysteries. By extension, this symbol points to the processes whereby a mind has become strong and very clear – enough actually to show others how to shape life on earth. This is the magician – the master who demonstrates lordship over the circle that he chooses to influence.

This elevated station can only be reached by penetrating into the depth of matters. The mysteries exist in the form of the relationship between things, symbols and people. It takes a sharp yet intuitive mind, fully focused and engaged, to understand the rules that govern these interactions.

Unintelligent conformity to the 'rule book' – written by the blind to lead the blind – is the attitude of sheep, for whom comfort is more important than wisdom. Comfort is better utilised as a recuperative process until further adventures claim our attention, and in the same way any belief in the rule book is but a staging post towards real knowledge.

For seekers, it is necessary to try things out before we accept them as true. Whatever ideas we may be offered for the explanation of life, we need to experiment with them, and also opposing viewpoints, and organise our experiences into a considered way of life – a path based on informed principles that work for us.

These experiments take the form of our ambitions. If we cannot achieve our goals, then our ideas about the nature of reality are false – so we must change them. Above all else, the physical realm is an examination of our competence in demonstrating that we affirm abundance and not scarcity.

The feedback we are looking for – to validate our hypotheses about how best to live – is happiness. For the creative optimist, life is delightful. When the default condition and underlying certainty of life is joy, then we know that we have found our place and path.

We are only interested in questing for the meaning of life until we are happy with the way things are. Then, even teaching becomes unnecessary.

LEO 19

A HOUSEBOAT PARTY

(CONGENIALITY)

RUDHYAR: A HOUSEBOAT PARTY

PERMISSION TO BEHAVE WILDLY

It is healthy to 'let your hair down' occasionally

Whereas some social events are subject to firm guidelines about behaviour, more youthful types have parties that allow people to spend some time on 'the other side of the tracks'. There is a bohemian quality to them and behaviour tends to be more eccentric, liberal and extreme. These events contribute hugely to society's unconscious need to evolve - by examining rigidity and seeing how far margins can be pushed. This is how knowledge itself branches out.

Culture evolves as we open up to the muse and relax into our creative side

Being congenial at a house boat party – this reminds us that in order to preserve the specialness of what is special, we need to seal off parts of our life so to protect them from intrusion. Work is better done when we are focused on work; play is better done when we focus on play. Taking time off work to support play is clearly important – and we need to show how well we understand this in fact not just words.

Generally, people think and talk as though they prefer to relax than to work, yet really their actions offer a different narrative. Many work with an attitude that doesn't support happiness – perhaps they feel pressured by heavy responsibilities, financial burdens, or a work-ethic culture. It is by no means obvious that work carried out with such an approach adds much true value to their lives.

It may well be true that even dull routines can be made exalted by the right attitude of mind; nevertheless, if we are to be effective, then we need to make time for pleasantness and relaxation, and certainly as a relief from working periods.

Our work contributes to the world at large – but then so does our relaxation. This is not often understood, let alone seen as wisdom.

We acknowledge culture as emblematic of the soul of a community; it is the fruit of complex and far-reaching cooperative community effort. When the creative relax into their creativity, then what arises is a culture of beauty.

Of course, we need not overdo the down-time. Such congeniality as shown at a party is exceptional behaviour, rather than part of the routine. If we over-indulge, then we lose focus and become ineffective and dull.

So we remember to completely let go of work for a while, because it serves the community. Also it is important to open up to the muse through the creative processes, which are best stimulated with the mind in repose.

LEO 20

ZUNI SUN WORSHIPPERS

(FIDELITY)

RUDHYAR: ZUNI INDIANS PERFORM A RITUAL TO THE SUN

SACRED CONNECTION THROUGH NATURE

It is good to 'let your hair down' occasionally

A sacred ritual has the sense of bringing the participants to a higher state of grace wherein they can remember the depth of connectedness between God, Nature and Self. If we forget to remember sacredness then we denude ourselves of our most beautiful aspects and also our most precious ancestral stream of wisdom. The Sun is the origin of our substance and the giver of all life, we are part of its history and entirely dependent upon it, if we do not find sacredness it that then where will we find it?

Individuality arises only ever out of shared traditions

Sun worshipping may or may not be the ideal means to capture a sense of how to bind ourselves back to the universe and awaken the cosmic dimension of consciousness. However, it will certainly give assurance that our yearnings are part of a shared dream; and this is empowering. In the modern era, Pentecost, Easter and Bayram have replaced Sun worship for most people.

These ceremonies are social constructs designed to express and renew our recognition that there are natural forces, and higher forces. By remembrance of them we receive strength by tuning in to the source of life, so regenerating the life force within ourselves.

Also they serve to ritualise our loyalties. This establishes a deep and solid group rapport on the level of both head and heart, so unites those of us who choose to be associated together by acknowledging fidelity to roots and tribe.

As older ways and values are challenged for effectiveness and continued relevance by the irresistible forces of evolutionary change, we are buttressed by our adherence to principles agreed, shared, and made clear through these rites. To be accepted as part of the group, we need to align with such sacraments, whether or not we fully agree with their implied sacred meaning.

Despite the normal concerns about the discrepancies between self-chosen and imposed group values, such a process of compliant alignment does in fact support self-actualisation. This is because the group tradition is a vital aspect of the self, and always serves as a template out of which individual variations may be constructed.

Our current situation and historical background, which are both coherently demonstrated and embodied in the collective ceremonies of our people, are the source from which all potential of self-expression may be drawn. Any individual quest to realise an inner sense of self would fail without the foundation of such roots and values.

However, the deep inner conviction of the importance of ceremony must not seduce the individual away from their sense of personal reality. Surrendering to empty ritual, simply because it is expected, leads to loss of uniqueness of identity, and confusion about what is really true. To be true, we need to be faithful not to the ritual itself, but to that Grace towards which the ritual points us.

LEO 21 – 25

NOBILITY

To gain freedom we must find a way to let go of emotional neediness. This is a truly formidable task and separates the many from the few. Most seekers approach the path without sufficient diligence and commitment, almost as an entertainment; yet of course it is exactly the opposite of that. It is confusing, dangerous and difficult and we must lose all of our attachments to the comforts of society including acceptance and approval.

Sufism teaches us of two attitudes of activity and it takes great sensitivity of intuition to recognise which of these two attitudes to employ. The one, Rasul, is easy and flowing, where it is entirely appropriate to do exactly what we feel we want to do, so that the truly creative message of who we are is expressed and developed. The other, Abdullah, is a challenge – when the right thing is not at all comfortable; we are fundamentally tested, and by working with limitation we grow in stature and add depth of character.

In other words, there are times when the task in hand must be confronted and overcome, and times when it is better for all concerned for us to relax and let it all flow – when involvement is tantamount to interference. This is no small matter. It is an enlightened being who always knows when to act, and when to refrain from action. If we choose to act, then we act with full intention and the expectation of good outcomes. No lack of courage is shown, no absence of clarity – heart and mind are in alignment and completely committed to see the matter to its conclusion. Through this is developed nobility of being, a quality that earns and commands respect. People are inherently drawn to one who has dignified their life through the constancy of their appropriateness both to act and to exercise restraint.

LEO 21

CHICKENS INTOXICATED

(ACCENTUATION)

RUDHYAR: INTOXICATED CHICKENS DIZZILY FLAP THEIR WINGS TRYING TO FLY

SPIRITUAL CONFUSION

We must open up to secret knowledge at the right time in the right way

With all things, timing is of the essence and spiritual awakening is no exception. The two 'wings' that let us 'fly' are said to be spiritual evolution and psychological healing. Without the first we can remain dry and lack charisma no matter how emotionally mature. Yet without the second even someone with high awareness will lack balance and increasingly gain the potential to run around as confused as a headless chicken. As we gain spiritual insights it is important to assimilate them into our maturing personality.

Desire for stimulation and satisfaction expresses unfilled spiritual yearnings

Chickens are not designed to drink alcohol. Similarly we should avoid elements which are essentially alien to our nature, because to do so will inevitably cause distress to the human soul.

Experimentation has validity of course; it is how we learn. Yet the accentuation of various features of our personality can be achieved by other means than the imbibing of what are basically poisons.

We tend to seek comfort for our inadequacies by taking things into the physical body – typically food and drugs – to quickly deal with uncomfortable feelings; yet this behaviour usually creates dependency.

A better approach, though it demands a greater degree of self-mastery, is to realise that our needs for stimulation can be made useful. They are a reason for achievement rather than to produce a cancellation of potentials through substance abuse.

Our capacity for self-mobilisation enables us to rise to the needs of any possible situation and our ability to project ourselves can be used to accentuate positive qualities or negative.

Looking beneath the surface, we find the futility of expecting to use a physical agency to achieve what we require, which actually are non-physical results, in particular the feeling of rightness of being.

To free ourselves from the bondage of external materials, we learn to reinterpret our desires for satisfaction as actually a higher yearning for peace and harmony. These qualities are better found by turning within to find how to employ the mind itself to accentuate them without anything foreign and inappropriate.

LEO 22

A CARRIER PIGEON

(ENLIGHTENMENT)

RUDHYAR: A CARRIER PIGEON FULFILLING ITS MISSION

SPIRITUAL PURPOSE

Having a specific goal trains spiritual knowledge to a purpose

Perhaps the best way to integrate spiritual wisdom into personality is through service. It is not an entirely necessary function of the seeker and yet it is rare indeed to find a highly evolved person who does not gladly serve without expectation of full compensation. Often this service is through healing, teaching and guidance.

Enlightenment is a normal process – the marrying of intuition with rationality

A carrier pigeon symbolises the giving and receiving of messages. Here it alludes to the ability of an enlightened mind to apply itself to any question and come to know that which needs to be learned.

When we have properly developed our normal processes of mind to perfect rational and intuitive thought, then we can command knowledge and gain greater mastery over all situations. One who has knowledge has power, but knowledge does not present itself to us gift-wrapped, it arises in response to a clear, direct enquiry sustained over time.

The softer side of knowledge is intuition and develops in line with incisive rationality. In balance, these two facilities of mind enable us to receive and understand messages of immediate pertinence, which have to be currently relevant in order for us to grasp the deepest implications and subtleties.

We recognise that such an ability is likelier to be expressed when we face unfamiliar or critical issues; it is there for when we need it. Yet we must 'turn it on' by directing our attention to the existence of this understanding within us.

Implicit within this is the extraordinary extent to which we can count on life to provide whatever we need, in response to our clear focus of enquiry. Each of us has special requirements for which intelligence is essential to know how to respond to events, and those who realise how to uncover this have a special advantage.

Many on the path to enlightenment seem to be willing to let go of simple good sense. This is not at all helpful. To make mystical what is in fact normal pushes it away from our grasp. Enlightenment is a normal progression of every mind as it aspires towards self-perfection. It is not a state; it is a process. It is a distortion of purpose to direct the mind towards pessimism, anxiety and ignorance; clear enquiry is optimistic and expectant. Unhappy, unknowing people attract the negative aspects of life whereas happy, enlightened people know that what works best in any situation is faith.

Much of what we want in life is easily available and immediate – there is literally nothing between us and the fulfilment of our desire – whether for knowledge or for satisfaction. Yet we have to release want; we must allow it to be replaced with the end of want. Enlightenment is the end of wanting knowledge. The enlightened mind affirms answers not questions – and with the same certainty that a carrier pigeon has in returning home.

LEO 23

A BAREBACK RIDER

(AUDACITY)

RUDHYAR: IN A CIRCUS THE BAREBACK RIDER DISPLAYS HER DANGEROUS SKILL

FLAIR

The spiritual journey is not structured and clear, we need to approach life with subtlety

The balance of skills and qualities needed to progress higher levels of integrated consciousness are comparable to that of a virtuoso, one who has mastered a number of quite different abilities and can demonstrate that mastery at will. The seekers path is by no means safe or easy; it requires us all to occasionally put ourselves in harm's way as a normal condition of life.

A daring spirit will search for new challenges to escape ordinariness

The bareback rider is not showing off; rather he is testing his audacity so to keep alive his courageous spirit. The problems of a modern life need not trouble us if we learn to behave with such a carefree, assured disposition.

Coping with the immediate world of our experience is totally within our ability, in fact we each have the capacity to master situations at all points. This may well require that we become audacious at times in order to overcome a stagnation of vision and confidence – which leads to capitulation and reluctant acceptance of imposed constraints.

We are exactly designed to be a perfect fit for all we encounter – although in fact the reverse is a more appropriate way to see this – our circumstances are made for us, and no-one else, because we, and no-one else, are the best person to deal with them.

The special functions in life with which we engage need to be faced with uncompromising courage and undiminished skills. What at first may seem daunting and beyond our reach, is instead to be seen as the next stage of our evolutionary journey. We must rise to the task at hand.

Nothing is beyond our reach when we approach life like this. We have the ability to capitalise on every opportunity, to potentially bring form to our aspirations and achieve the goals we set ourselves.

We are not static beings, dead and having no room for expansion. We are constantly in the process of self-refinement and we may expect to improve, provided we overcome an intemperate desire for self-display and applause.

Without becoming irresponsibly inadequate in coping with our adult duties and aspirations, it is a question of finding the best way of allowing the wild side of us an appropriate degree of audacious freedom.

LEO 24

AN UNTIDY, UNKEMPT MAN

(IMPERTURBABILITY)

RUDHYAR: CONCENTRATED ON SPIRITUAL ATTAINMENT, A MAN SITS IN NEGLECT OF BODILY APPEARANCE

FOCUS

We cannot expect mastery unless we bring total concentration to the matter in hand

We cannot focus attention on two things at the same time. A highly motivated seeker will not attend to worldly matters with the same ambition as others, choosing to concentrate fully on what they consider more important - the inner reality of spiritual practice. How they appear to others is of small concern.

Eccentric wisdom contributes most to evolution

This is an image of a person who spends very little effort presenting an acceptable face to society through the way they behave. It matters little what society thinks or does in response to such an open challenge to its values, this character is not perturbed. By extension, the thoughts and ideas of a truly developed being are not much moderated by others' opinions about wisdom or morality.

Perhaps even as a direct consequence of disdaining collective values, individual qualities are intensified and brought into higher relief, in this way outer accomplishment easily follows.

Loved, therefore, for who we are, not how we appear, we can enjoy a somewhat unusual – even perverse – satisfaction in the neglecting of how we come across to the world at large. The antisocial attitude is a mark of the eccentric rather than the clown.

Taken to the extreme, a complete self-confidence within the uniqueness of our characteristic approach can show itself as a complete disregard for any of society's rewards or penalties.

This particular interaction between self and society may well create a need in us to show every one of our physical and psychological attributes to best effect – to demonstrate our particular values and value in serving society. We like to show exactly how we are different – partly to define who we are, partly to influence others.

This sets up a tension and therefore a constant process of self-refinement as we strive to be a better example of society by rejecting its collective values and affirming our own unique vision. This is how we contribute to the development of the race.

We see a paradox in this – that an apparently selfish motivation leads, in its extreme form, to a wholesome, and entirely necessary, evolutionary contribution to society at its highest level of progress.

LEO 25

A LARGE CAMEL CROSSING THE DESERT

(ADEQUACY)

RUDHYAR: A LARGE CAMEL IS SEEN CROSSING A VAST AND FORBIDDING DESERT

INDEPENDENCE

We need to learn to rely more upon ourselves and reduce our dependency upon others

The more we are self-reliant, the less we depend for our needs upon others who so often require us to be inauthentic or curbed, muted versions of ourselves, so thwarting our spiritual aspirations. Having become disinterested in how we appear to the world, we must go one stage further and minimise what we require of worldly comforts.

Trials make us capable of meeting life head on – powerful and fully mobilised

The camel symbolises a plodding, uncomplaining, uncompromising, persistence that accomplishes the task in hand at whatever cost to self. Let us feel the certainty that, with endurance, we are adequate for all situations, including those that offer little or no comfort and which put us on notice of the need to survive difficult terrain.

Each individual, in their way of being, reveals their own sense of what a person really should be able to accomplish if they mobilise their inner resources properly. There is nothing in a camel that speaks much of beauty or elegance and it is not famed for its social skills either; likewise, we would do well to remember not to prioritise lesser skills and achievements when tackling greater issues.

Whatever circumstances we encounter can be met with expectation of achievement, because we can access the underlying basis of who we are; we know how to endure. Deeply ingrained within the human spirit is the sense of the importance of being worthwhile and measuring up to some value-based standards we set for ourselves. At core we are good and good for purpose.

There will always be difficulties to overcome – without which there can be no sense of achievement nor opportunities for evolution since what we refer to as character cannot grow strong and noble otherwise. By refinement of character we find how to integrate all aspects of human psychology into our understanding.

A close connection is found to exist between the rich and mature character we develop, and our life task to overcome imposed or imagined limitations and handicaps. Adequacy, in facing and successfully meeting these challenges, is the foundation of self-empowerment, and indeed self-discovery.

There needs to be some caution in applying such a power, because it can be put to inappropriate use. A distortion of the principle would express as ruthless and ultimately self-defeating blindness of purpose. 'I can so I do'. Such blindness can also prevent us from actually noticing our achievements. When the goal has been reached it is a silly, wasteful expenditure of effort and resources to continue aiming for it.

The more pleasing and acceptable expression of this power is through service – we can use it to help others, and develop a tolerant and humble camel-like attitude. Service for its own sake is its own reward, and furthermore, we begin to discover that it may possibly lead to an even greater reward – the sweet and graceful feeling of humility though which momentarily we may glimpse the Divine.

LEO 26 – 30

OPTIMISM

The path is a journey of struggle and surrender, first one then the other in a never-ending cycle of reversals. We must spend half of our time making claims and perhaps feeling a little important to have created a personal masterpiece, then the other half releasing our grasp - on things, on ideas, on self-love and on the security of limitation, in order to feel the grandeur of participation in the real Masterpiece, to quote Leonard Cohen. To feel humbled by our pride is no more appropriate than to feel pride in our humility - both can be seen as silly by the one who is in wonder on the shores of realisation gazing out at the oceanic vastness of Manifestation, tickled pink to be a speck of dust in it all.

It is a central aspect of being human that we can make things out of thoughts. When these are divinely-inspired ideas, then the fruits of our enthusiasm are easily and abundantly made real in the physical realm. Thus does spirit become matter – through the agency of inspiration operating with dexterity and creativity.

We are guided by optimism to see the bigger picture – that when we trust in life, and trust in ourselves, we can look for, and expect, outcomes that sparkle and shine. There is no need for us to accept less than enough, to put up with a compromised version of our lives – this is the application and result of pessimism. From an expanded perception of life, all things have their place and time, and nothing is inappropriate – although a more blinkered outlook cannot see this. Pessimism is blinkered; it creates difficulties, and interprets challenges as problems rather than opportunities for growth. It is always helpful to look for the best in any person or situation – such an approach is a creative force for the good and transforms darkness into light, lesser into greater. We know we are good and deserving and we feel capable of rendering that into our life circumstances. The radiance of such confidence inspires others to do the same so that an energy vortex of spiralling trust in life is presented to the world.

LEO 26

A RAINBOW

(SIGNIFICANCE)

RUDHYAR: AFTER THE HEAVY STORM, A RAINBOW

PROMISE OF SUCCESS

Self-liberation is not subject to whims of fate but a guaranteed result of endeavour

The rainbow is universally accepted as having the ability to inspire us to feel beauty, wonder and optimism. Its symbolism clearly links two realms - it is a bridge from Heaven to Earth pointing to an elusive pot of gold. As we evolve spiritually, we are reminded to keep in touch with the earth plane so to develop more and more of an ability to function simultaneous in the two realms, on Earth as it is in Heaven. This is how light is brought to bear upon the darkness.

We tend to give more significance to what we can control than what can control us

What gives life meaning are events of significance – and whatever on our own account we choose to have happen, is what matters to us. We are keen to exclude the boredom of the mundane, and direct ourselves towards situations that allow us to feel that we matter and our lives are worthwhile.

The rainbow appears in the sky like magic. This somehow is taken as divine approval and support, as though we are being reassured after a troubled period, or even encouraged in our current activities; it helps to strengthen our resolve as we participate in unpromising relations.

Yet with appropriate balance of sunshine and moisture, a rainbow must always appear, because that is the order of things.

It is a definite stage of personal evolution when we come to realise this. We come to learn of the existence of a reliable pattern in life – despite certain appearances and perceptions, it is well ordered, not chaotic. Whether we take it as divine intervention or our own level of mastery, certain outcomes are reliable.

When we strive to reach goals of a more enduring sort, we are guided by our own certainty that we will be supported by external forces – earthly or heavenly. Nature cooperates with every vision.

With this approach to life we develop the sense of a very real spiritual power and presence in all our personal efforts and desire.

The rainbow is a powerful evocative symbol of optimism – that life bestows uncritical acceptance of every passing hope or dream. We can depend upon that.

LEO 27

DAYBREAK

(GENESIS)

RUDHYAR: THE LUMINESCENCE OF DAWN IN THE EASTERN SKY

THE LIGHT OF NEW BEGINNINGS

Everything has its alpha and omega; each part of this eternal cycle is blessed with light

Typically, a peak experience, wherein we achieve further awakening, is followed by a dark period of struggling confusion as we attempt to assimilate what we have realised. Yet cold, dark nights end; always there is dawn, and we can refresh our approach with a renewed clarity of mind and joy of heart. Eventually we find ourselves coping easily with darkness and remembering to affirm joy and clarity as a constant life attitude.

All life is cyclical holding the promise of renewal and joy in the hope of a better tomorrow

Daybreak, like spring, is a constant in life. The promise of renewal is repeatedly emphasised by such experiences, and this is the essence of reality – that in every manifestation, of the world and of the self, there is resurgence.

As the changes unfold, unceasingly, there is often confusion about the exact nature of our current reality. Yet the genesis promise assures us that life may be captured and recaptured indefinitely. Specific circumstances come and go, while the single constant is that tomorrow is a new day with refreshing possibilities.

Another level of meaning is also implied with this image – that all life is cyclical. The human heart is deeply reassured by the security offered within the certainty of this degree of continuity.

Secure in the faith of perpetual regeneration, we allow ourselves to perceive reality the way it truly is – ever a new reworking of the stuff of life. Genesis is now, eternally. '*In the Beginning'* is not a past-tense historical myth; it is the only lasting truth, and it is current. Life is only ever new and transient; immediacy is its incontrovertible nature.

Nonetheless, we have a sense of time as sequential and unidirectional. This is a device of mind, an expedient, by which we introduce a measure of control over the otherwise frightening implications of perpetual newness. Reason, as aspect of mind, overlays a 'cause and effect' model onto the fabric of reality. Without that, we could not find meaning within our involvement with life.

It is reason that curtails our wishful thinking and structures our aspirations into a realizable form.

Without it, we would have to find satisfaction in what we now have – because our future would be completely vague and ill-defined. Also – however pleasant it is here and now, and however advanced we may be in our spiritual philosophy, still there is some joy in the hope of a better tomorrow.

LEO 28

MANY LITTLE BIRDS ON THE LIMB OF A LARGE TREE

(RAMIFICATION)

RUDHYAR: MANY LITTLE BIRDS ON THE LIMB OF A BIG TREE

FINDING FOCUS

We must function within the scope of our ability to concentrate the attention

No matter how far we advance, life will always throw up challenges and examinations. The realised person is not excused from such tests and struggles, it's just that they have learned from their experiences how to focus the mind and how to affirm optimism without ignoring or denying the issue at hand. Such focusing is the optimal operation of choice - trying to do to do much would stop us from doing anything especially well.

At defining moments in life, we must opt for that which feeds our long-term goals

If we take birds to represent the mental realm of inspiration and ideas, then this image points to the need to limit ourselves by selecting one out of many options. We actually define ourselves by what we reject of the great multiplicity of choices we have. This usually is best done by carefully considering likely ramifications before the implementation of any particular life course.

From what is available, we can expand our range of life possibilities, but only as long as we opt for one thing over another. Some people are very open to uncertainty, and can even enjoy a perverse feeling of momentary self-importance when they are confused – this does not lead to anything upon which we can build a contented life.

Lesser things become greater; little ideas sometimes grow to become important. The values and principles that structure our lives and root us into reality like a tree are the seeds of the future fruits we harvest in our situations.

In any moment we stand at the crossroads between one potential future and another. If we are confused, we really must find centre – because our ability to cope in a crisis depends upon this. A crisis is a turning point, and we need to turn in the right direction, opting for the better seed stock.

Our destiny unfolds like a river, from a source which at the time is so often seemingly insignificant and completely obscure – meeting a new person or having a new idea for example. This advises us to focus on ideas that have enduring orientation and will feed our long-term goals – things like goodness and beauty – so they, rather than bewilderment, become the basis of our future.

We are tested by life as to whether we can hold onto our composure. So much comes at us – whether opportunity or challenge – and we have to maintain poise, or we lose the power to manage, and create our lives how we want them to be.

However, if we can capture the mood of a special moment and hold onto it self-confidently with strength and optimism, then we experience the wonderful lightness of being that is available to human spirit not only as the fruits of experience but as the seed too. This is the feeling-quality of our potential for happiness.

LEO 29

A MERMAID

(IMPORTUNITY)

RUDHYAR: A MERMAID EMERGES FROM THE OCEAN WAVES READY FOR REBIRTH IN HUMAN FORM

DESIRE FOR MANIFESTATION

Creativity has uncertainty whether divine inspiration will be successfully given form or die

Not only are we required to engage with the world in order to assimilate spiritual realisations, we are also given the motivation to do so. This motivation takes the form of the artist's yearning to make real what arises in imagination. It feels compelling, there is an urgency to grasp what has slipped into the conscious mind, and yet could so easily slip away, back into the ocean of unconsciousness from which it arose like a mermaid.

Pure spirit insists that life shines joyfully

The mermaid is a picture of uncompromising, artless, innocence and eagerness. Like her, at core each of us is utterly unsullied; in consequence, we must reject everything inauthentic in our lives since it would tend to corrupt our elemental integrity of being.

In the end, self-fulfilment is all there is of real value – so we seek full participation in life to explore and express every facet of our character.

Composed of pure spirit, whose essence-nature is fiery freedom, the soul is constantly renewing itself in a perpetual birthing process. This shines through as the light of naive enthusiasm for life – a keenness for new experiences.

Without this renewal, there could never be fullness of self. To be completely who we are, we need to launch ourselves wholeheartedly into whatever transpires, following our instincts and trusting them to guide us true.

Importunity – pressing our position – is a natural result of this approach to life. We know what we want, we want it now – and if that's not convenient for others, then let them press back! Such an appetite is evidence of desire, and desire is the quintessence of the life force; it is always good.

However, acting upon appetite may not always be mindful and can sometimes upset the balance in how we relate to others. Discrimination is advised if we are to minimise the awkwardness that comes after too large a degree of insensitivity.

That said, a mermaid is a joyful force of Nature simply because she trusts her feelings and acts upon them unceremoniously; she brings a sparkle to life just by being what she is.

LEO 30

AN UNSEALED LETTER

(CONFIDENCE)

RUDHYAR: AN UNSEALED LETTER

UNIVERSALITY OF KNOWLEDGE

Secrets only hold for a while; all that is known by one will eventually be known by all

Our artworks - whether carved in marble or as momentary charming gestures of personality - are as letters written and sent into the world. Our words and even our unspoken thoughts are are all contributors to the totality of our glorious life message and, at least on the most subtle levels of reality, these cannot be kept to ourselves and hidden from the world indefinitely. We are all connected; we are one together, and every little aspect of who we are and what we have thought and done is eventually revealed.

Spiritual integrity generates empowering confidence

A person who has a high measure of spiritual integrity has confidence in life. This shows in the way they believe in other people and in situations generally.

Leaving a private letter unsealed is likely to test whether our friends are truly trustworthy and this risk is necessary if we are to discover how far we can trust them – because some people are so indiscreet that it amounts to childish irresponsibility against which a wise person needs to take precautionary measures.

When we learn just how far to trust we earn the respect of people. There is skill to be learned in assessing the appropriate level of confidence to place in another.

We see that there needs to be moderation, based on our experiences, of how much trust to employ. Each of us has developed a normal competency in applying lessons we learned the hard way. If you leave a purse on a bus, you must not expect to retrieve it later. That's not the kind of world we live in.

Nevertheless, the reliance we do place upon the discretion of others is remarkable – and enables our comfortable day-to-day living. We see then that we have a litmus test about with whom to share our lives. Can we legitimately place our faith in them? If we cannot, then life becomes fraught.

However, suspicion is a poison to the mind whenever it become set as a general temperament, so we must make sure that our routine life circumstances do not engender constant mistrust.

When we have done what we can to build a community environment within which there are few enough dangers of dishonesty, then we are well advised to practise trust as a general life attitude. In spite of frequent disillusionments, this serves us best in the long run, because it generates self-assurance and all the power that goes with that.

VIRGO 1 – 5

CONVICTION

The maturing of consciousness that characterises our spiritual path requires us to move steadily away from self-identification and embrace higher and more subtle forms of energy. We realise that there are self-aware life-forms other than humans, and we are but a small fish in the ocean of life. This process of discovery can be radically challenging and hard to take, yet we are unable to access our own higher aspects without these struggles; without the need for faith we will not develop faith. And as we open up to faith in the unseen realms, we see more of what we could not see before.

Who we are is partly defined, and certainly contextually shaped, by our circumstances and environment; it especially includes the collective, accepted myth that determines our local reality, and attempts to limit certain behaviours with its versions of right and wrong, good and bad. We can become overly oriented towards demonstration of acceptable results, unwisely trying to establish objective, measurable evidence to prove our worth to people around us; this carries the risk of persistent anxiety. The task is to transform our conviction that we are useful to a higher, existential level of self-assurance – that we are worth our place simply by being. We all have a unique contribution to make, and offer an important ingredient towards the whole cosmic soup – but really only when we are true. We need to find a way to reconcile who we are with where we are, and be assured that, even as we fit in with the immediate surroundings that influence us, our inner sense of self is authentically maintained – and to be convinced that that is enough to be worth our salt.

VIRGO 1

A MAN'S HEAD

(CHARACTER)

RUDHYAR: IN A PORTRAIT, THE SIGNIFICANT FEATURES OF A MAN'S HEAD ARE ARTISTICALLY EMPHASISED

CONTEXTUALISATION

Our uniqueness can be understood by grasping the significance of where we are and why

In the process of personal evolution, it is true that we must begin by making a claim upon life according to how we feel to be different from others. Yet it is no less true to give to that uniqueness the perspective of context - by being able to see where we fit in the larger picture and grasping comprehension of the overarching form that characterises this present moment. We need to learn how to serve the greater purposes of our species by identifying what is and what is not appropriate.

Ever-present self-assurance expresses an effective fullness of character

No one will ever be able to affirm our highest worth but ourselves. To express the fullness of character certainly requires an effective self-assurance to be central and ever-present, yet self-betrayal is inevitable should this lead to self-overestimation through vanity.

There are rewards – a multitude of toys and compliments – made available to those who learn to apply themselves to the exacting demands of a path of self-proclamation. These trinkets of fame and fortune are as ephemeral and inconsequential as the gifts in a Christmas cracker, yet pleasing and helpful to focus the mind.

However, the real juice is the prestige that is well-deserved and hard-won – such as a wreath of laurel leaves placed on the head, which endows a person of distinction with legitimate honour.

We see in the head of a man the full maturity of his being. We can read there much of his history and aspirations, loves and fears – and the extent of his alignment with his own sense of personal integrity.

Life's struggles and openings allow us – and cause us – to make known and clear those things which we hold to have special importance and give meaning to our lives. Our ideals are brought to bear upon our situations as we pursue our goals. In this way, great dignity can accrue to ambition.

At a fairly advanced level of personal achievement, we find that others have come to depend upon us as a direct result of our having willingly taken on certain responsibilities. This is made possible by our confidence in our self-determined set of values that add up to a code and path.

In some mysterious way this formula engenders a supreme clarity of vision that cuts through the fog of what may be, to create a path of what must be. Opportunities to shine emerge and attract us so that we continuously accelerate towards greater and greater self-realisation.

VIRGO 2

LARGE WHITE CROSS UPRAISED

(GLORIFICATION)

RUDHYAR: A LARGE WHITE CROSS DOMINATES THE LANDSCAPE

GROWTH THROUGH SUFFERING

As they say: no pain no gain

Although a certain degree of understanding comes from the mental process of analysis there needs to be real challenge to the level of ordeal if we are to deepen our knowledge. The sense of forced surrender of self is as painful as crucifixion emotionally and yet is an entirely necessary step in liberation.

Who is true, offers uncompromising testimony to their deepest allegiances

At school, at work and with our family and friends, there is real pressure on us to go along with things. The flow of collective behaviour has a current as strong as a river, and we are destined to be carried along with it unless we exercise moral courage, and restrict any involvement in mindless conformity. This courage is the dynamic of our rising up.

Often the first examination as to our courage of self-expression has to do with religion and cultural ethics; sadly most people are quickly and completely seduced by dogma and doctrine. The orators and priests rarely explain with reason – they tend to persuade using specious argument and emotion.

However, by our very existence, each of us is spokesperson for a set of values – for which we are placed in a position of stewardship. It is our sacred duty to take good care of our system of belief and morality as though it were a child.

This is done by staying true, and offering uncompromising testimony to our deepest allegiances. If we believe in rationality, then our code must be rational – and we must challenge whatever is not logical. If we believe in love, we must challenge what is not loving. It is our fearless straightforwardness that acts as a corrective to maladjusted aspects in other individuals and society in general.

Glorification of Christ in the raising of His symbol is an example of this. Whether or not we ourselves are Christian, we still can nevertheless see that this process raises the aspiration of its participants, above the commonplace and mediocre, to a transcendent level of hope.

The original symbolism becomes changed over the years. The cross was added at a later stage in Christian imagery – other symbols for Christ have been the lamb, the unicorn, the pelican and the fish – but the raising up stays clear and obvious. People glorify by raising things up.

We can reject the cross, even Christ, but can we really reject the raising up of sacredness and the hope in furthering the spread of goodness? We cannot.

VIRGO 3

TWO ANGELS BRINGING PROTECTION

(SECURITY)

RUDHYAR: TWO GUARDIAN ANGELS

AFFIRMATION OF HIGHER PERSONAL POWER

We are interpenetrated by structured life energy, which can appear to us as light beings

It is only in times of trouble that we access the highest possibilities of self, breaking through to a greater degree of faith, and the corresponding growth of further possibility. Whether we focus on the more scientific or the more religious explanations is not our major concern - guardian angels or unseen dimensions of the personal psyche - what matters is that we find the strength to cope, and grow, though the dark periods.

We feel secure when holding alive the certainty that angels are protecting us

There is a quality of power within human character, which becomes the hallmark of our spiritual station. This is often evidenced by self-confidence, charisma and clarity, and acts upon the outer world with considerable success.

It is that which draws resources and people towards us so we that can facilitate the simple and consistent convergence of all good things to impact upon our circumstances. This is of course the function of power – to harness together all we need to effect changes that support our idea of what is good for us.

The principle illustrates how our high-mindedness pays very pleasant dividends. Development of spirituality has a worldly aspect. To say that you will get your rewards in heaven is a false reading that demonstrates an inadequate understanding of what heaven means, and the immediacy of cause and effect.

This symbol shows of the certainty of conviction we can acquire, enabling fulfilment of dreams. We are secure, and we feel secure, holding alive the certainty that angels are protecting our best interests. The word angel is not well understood. It is perhaps better to refer to this aspect of the human psyche as part of the superconscious.

We always move to sustain the soul's outreach – so we live out eternal values in our lives, and reap the rewards of our relationship with angelic forces – whatever we imagine them to be.

Any vain pretence will diminish the effectiveness of these forces, self-importance shows in both our inability to trust, and our ignorance of what angels are.

Basically, there are traditional legions of heavenly forces ready to be called upon. Few people learn how to call them up, or get confused about the appropriate means of interacting with them. It is simple enough – we must believe in them as higher aspects of ourselves, and that they respond to our appeal. Yet they need to be summoned in order to operate, so we have to know how to pray.

VIRGO 4

BLACK CHILD PLAYING WITH WHITE CHILDREN

(INTIMACY)

RUDHYAR: BLACK AND WHITE CHILDREN PLAY TOGETHER HAPPILY

WE ARE ALL CHILDREN OF GOD

Racial prejudice is evidence of a fundamental misunderstanding of the nature of reality

Having our own inner strength, we are far less dependent emotionally upon our own culture and its norms and codes, and any sense dissolves that our own race or nationality is better than another. It is inconceivable that a true seeker would carry the burdensome weight of social prejudices to do with race or anything else. We are all children of God.

All prejudice is fear-based, a well-adjusted person promotes greater universal intimacy

Everyone has their own particular way of being what they are; this must be respected.

The enjoyment of success in life is sponsored by the ability to maintain our own uniqueness, and to recognise the uniqueness of others, in a wide variety of situations and events.

Rather than looking for differences as a cause of potential tension and rivalry, we can learn to appreciate them as the source of richness of our lives.

Indeed, without such differences, we cannot access such conscious awareness of who we ourselves truly are, and so will never be fully satisfied with our circumstances and attainments.

No single facet of character need be excluded, either from self-appraisal or group acceptance. The image shows how a group of young Caucasians expresses acceptance quite easily. By this gentle behaviour, all are raised. Children affirm, in their natural way of being, that it is better to play with any friend than to have no-one to play with. This intuitive knowledge is taken to the point that they so easily empathise with someone being left out, and often invite them in, disregarding inconsequential differences of background and appearance.

Prejudice and racial hatred are indicators of an individual's lack of capacity to adapt – evidence of psychological maladjustment.

There are no legitimate limits to human relationships, and any imposition of dogma, which would create division instead of intimacy, is false. All prejudice is fear-based. The authentic, peaceful attitude of a well-adjusted adult promotes intimacy – and yet so few adults are able to retain this simple understanding that never even occurs to children, let alone troubles them.

VIRGO 5

A MAN DREAMING OF FAIRIES

(OUTLOOK)

RUDHYAR: A MAN BECOMING AWARE OF NATURE SPIRITS AND NORMALLY UNSEEN SPIRITUAL AGENCIES

ENVISIONING

Imagination creates forms to make real what otherwise would never be expressed

There are subtle levels of energy that surround and permeate us and everything else, even scientists and dry philosophers can agree on this, and one way or another most of us can perceive and even feel it. Yet for us to bring that feeling into better awareness we must name it and give it a form typically through anthropomorphism. In our imagination we turn flows and concentrations of energy into stories that read like fairy tales in order better to know the unknowable.

Dreams are the coin of both inner and outer experiences

Dreams can be seen as psychological indicators during sleep, yet we use the same word to describe fairy stories with naïve, unrealistic endings. In this latter case, reality is partly flouted and the hard facts of the material world are not fully respected. However, they do facilitate our access to states of truth and beauty,

In this second case our dreams have an expanded purpose since they speak to us of our folklore roots. This sponsors greater width and depth of our resourcefulness of imagination, as we reach a sense of communion not only with our fellows but also with eternal archetypes, sometimes called 'the gods'.

When we participate in them as children, we become wide-eyed and credulous, transported to a world of make believe. So powerful is the effect of storytime that it binds together an adult community and informs its politics and economics – for example at Christmas or at the movie theatre.

It is insightful and wise to use them as the coin of both inner and outer experiences since, though insubstantial, the fact is that these dreams significantly influence the everyday world. They regulate every part of our outlook upon life. Outlook is perception – and perception shapes experience.

We shape the contours of the mind by the way we think, and the dreaming mind is no less capable of being reshaped by fairies than by electricity bills. The first probably has a more empowering influence than the second, and can be used creatively to sharpen the focus of our attention towards desired, positive goals. The mind is the most powerful of all our instruments of manifestation, and its primary tool is imagination.

More than this, it is our dreams that persuade others, not our reasons. Dreams are the foretaste of human achievement. The fairy story always seeds reality; first we imagine – and then what follows that is the disciplined plan, and the building.

It is important to reflect that without the reckless courage to say what has never before been said, we are constrained to serve those who do speak up. The visionary gives voice to their own vision, while the silent ones serve somebody else's.

VIRGO 6 – 10

ADAPTATION

Though dependent upon the community and thus required to conform, we are also compelled to express our true selves. This ability, to be self-expressive without shocking others, can be taught and learned, as long as we take the initiative to dance our own dance, and yet at other times to refrain from dancing and contemplate the inner dance. We find that true originality – our very life purpose - is accessed and realised when we find a state of mind which allows for us simultaneously to know both duality and transcendence.

Cyclical processes are universal, so we have to meet new dawns, new moons and new situations as a matter of course. If for no other reason than simply adapting to these changes, we need a significant degree of flexibility. Additionally, the mind-set that evolves from such an approach is fluid and non-judgemental, so it tends to see both points of view – thus facilitating individual intelligence, harmony, and efficiency, and is of real benefit to the common purpose.

A superabundance of opportunities exists for our joy and self-expression, and typically we need to surrender our attachment to any particular one in order to enjoy another. We gain significant advantages from being receptive to guidance, so that we learn why, how, and when to be guarded, and also when to open up. Instead of always straining to compete within a world seen as mostly punctuated by danger and scarcity, we come to understand and trust that sometimes we can offer all we have, and all we are, within a world more correctly seen as abundant, easy and safe.

VIRGO 6

A MERRY-GO-ROUND

(DIVERSION)

RUDHYAR: A MERRY-GO-ROUND

COMING TO TERMS WITH THE LIFE FORCE

Life has cycles and habits of repetition, nevertheless we can achieve something lasting

Like a Merry-Go-Round, our emotional life is both cyclic and up and down, and the development of character requires us to find the poise, or at least self-control, to deal with the changes. Implicit within our coping with life is that we can handle the life-force, especially in the sexual context.

Being open to recreation is a valuable way to cultivate creativity and reorient ourselves

It is well within the normal everyday experience of people to seek diversion. Such pleasure is the simplest possible form of creative exchange, and engages us in a healthy relaxing way with the lighthearted side of life.

We can usually learn more, and learn more easily, through play than work. So occasionally we need to look up from our tasks to have fun, and be willing to demonstrate openness to new activities and scenarios. What might develop from this is increased receptiveness to the opportunity hidden in each normal life situation.

It is no small thing to bring amusement into life just for its own sake, although most people become wrapped up attending to responsibilities and ardently pursuing ambitions.

Shifts and changes are, to some extent, novel and also somewhat cyclical – a merry-go-round of copycat experiences. We repeatedly choose the same kind of situations until we fully assimilate their lessons – and the encounters tend to intensify and become increasingly demanding so that we are forced to address issues.

To awaken further personal potentialities, we probably need to play more. It's an easy way to pick up new skills and have little fear of the consequences of any ineptitude. Play can become as serious as it likes, without needing to upset the fundamentals that we depend upon. Perception of failure during games is softer on the ego than during work.

So, including sport, play is not to be seen as time-off, as a reward, but as a necessary aspect of self-refinement – as well as an important contributor to the maintenance of vitality and youth.

There is a particular attitude of consciousness that is awakened mostly during downtime – in other words, when we relax something happens. This occurrence is healthy and supports inspired creative thoughts and feelings that are essential for complete good health.

VIRGO 7

A HAREM

(RESTRAINT)

RUDHYAR: A HAREM

BEING, NOT DOING

We emphasise what we are doing without giving much attention to being what we are

In that life has its special moments of passion and desire-fulfilment, there must always be the times between, the dull, low periods when we are waiting. In this emptiness there is opportunity to deepen our sense of who and what we are through inwardness and reflection. It is not necessary to fill one's time simply to stay busy and thereby avoid the feelings of being temporarily unwanted or irrelevant.

To focus on what is important, we need to insulate ourselves from intrusion

Members of a harem are severely restrained, yet this enforced conservation of energies need not become a surrender of basic ideals. Whatever principles we stand for must be independent of circumstances, or they are not principles.

There is a natural fellowship to be found with others who are similarly constrained, yet this connection is based on lesser values. We need to be careful not to reinforce our self-pity by spending time only with others in the same difficult position as we are. This amounts to self-betrayal for momentary ease.

Comfort of any stripe needs to be carefully monitored so that it remains a source of recuperation and relief, rather than a motivation for its own sake.

The truly courageous person will express a complete disregard of limitation and, at any cost, reject terms. There can be no compromise on matters of principle.

To claim our fullest potential in life, to become the best imaginable version of ourselves, then we are required to struggle to overcome. Knowing this, we learn to welcome apparent constraints as challenges, thoroughly necessary for struggle even to exist.

We all have plenty of examples where the limitations imposed by regimentation trigger great improvements in the development of character. Certain situations insulate us from life so that we can better concentrate on the difficult task at hand. The military is one example, the priesthood another. The withdrawal from one aspect of reality is a means to re-grasp it in another – and some of us need this level of constraint, otherwise we simply cannot focus on, or even discover, what is of greatest importance to us.

We can assume then that what currently restricts us is in place simply to support our growth, and will persist only until we have developed the power or imagination to break free of it. Resistance only increases the persistence; so we learn to surrender to the truth that sometimes we need to struggle.

VIRGO 8

FIRST DANCING INSTRUCTION

(ASSISTANCE)

RUDHYAR: A FIVE-YEAR-OLD CHILD TAKES A FIRST DANCING LESSON

APPRENTICESHIP

Putting aside the ego to sit at the feet of a master is a requirement for self-optimisation

Dance is a way to develop and express feelings in a controlled way. It is in a community setting and so not unbridled, yet it is emotionally expressive, so not a denial of life-force. This is emblematic of the journey we must take if we are to find freedom and realisation, and typically this requires that we find a teacher - one who can show us what higher states are available to an initiate.

We need instruction for perfecting the self; as we evolve we can help teach others

As we evolve, we gain increased definition of who we are. The uniqueness of self becomes more clearly specific as time passes. Yet it is not time itself that shapes us, it is the events that we encounter, especially challenges. Trials are necessary processes if we are to awaken within ourselves an effective continuity of effort.

The dance of life includes infinite versions of its rhythm and provides unlimited variations on the theme of its melody – and none is particularly better than another except to the ear of the individual.

In order to tune ourselves up, so that we can access our own rhythm and melody, we need help – we all need help. This image correctly demonstrates the role of someone who gives assistance: they are just helping us find out how to dance better. We can see it as a high degree of cooperation.

There is always a significant difference between what we are achieving and what we could achieve through further development of personal competence. Each of us is spiritually endowed with special skills to promote personal excellence.

An instructor's task is to stimulate effective endeavour by recognising and encouraging specific abilities in an individual towards greater self-realisation.

If we are to relate fully to others, and their hopes and dreams, spiritual aspirations and need for understanding, then we will choose to take up the noble task of self-perfecting. As we evolve towards our own perfection, so we become better able to help others.

This can sometimes be done quite lightly – and we can cheerfully accept our own ineptitude. Yet it is better not to allow such a casual approach to degenerate into a life path – because it leads us nowhere.

VIRGO 9

A MAN MAKING A FUTURIST DRAWING

(EXPERIMENT)

RUDHYAR: AN EXPRESSIONIST PAINTER AT WORK

BOLDLY BREAKING NEW GROUND

We must carve out our own path according to who we are and what only we can do

Our right to be unique and our ability to express this uniqueness creatively must be asserted. We must take it; it cannot be bestowed by a teacher. It is only the potential to be original that is a given in life; originality itself must be assumed.

Life is risky and we have to live with that

We can always find a legitimate way to establish ourselves with our fellows without self-betrayal or confusion, but it will involve experiment – a trial and error process.

Each one of us is unique, yet we ape the behaviour, mannerisms and opinions of our set, in order to fit in. It is very important that, notwithstanding social pressure, our individual originality must show in any true assertion of ourselves. Otherwise, we succumb to the complete, continuous confusion of inherited or borrowed ideas that describe them – our set – not us.

The risk we run is that our authentic expression of personality may just be too out of kilter with the common crowd. Then our uniqueness of expression would repel rather than attract.

Yet, by the very uniqueness of its essence-nature, creativity will always be a digression from established norms and expectations, so very likely will occasionally disturb and confront.

The trick is to find a way to engage others so that their own creative capacities are released in response to ours – as though a friendly challenge is begun to see who can outstrip the other in originality.

This is often more easily and successfully attempted when we unlock the more aesthetic or spiritual aspect of our inner selves. This in turn will trigger our own softer side, and also typically the distinctive inspiration of our associates and friends.

The expansion of the human mind, and the consequential extension of its powers, depends upon our willingness to experiment with new ideas – futurist drawings. This may lead to greater acceptance or it may lead to real rejection; life is risky and we have to live with that.

VIRGO 10

TWO HEADS LOOKING OUT AND BEYOND THE SHADOWS

(INTELLIGENCE)

RUDHYAR: TWO HEADS LOOKING OUT AND BEYOND THE SHADOWS

THE MIND'S ABILITY TO GRASP HIGHER REALITIES

We can choose to see beyond conflict and duality to a world of goodness and peace

Creativity reaches its peak when the artist becomes 'lost' in the work. In reality one is not quite lost but maintains clear awareness of the twin forces of manifested life in play as well as touching the transcendental state of inspiration that is beyond duality and limitation. This ability of mind - to rise above duality - is a reflection of its need to see beyond its own shadow, the shadow it casts when holding on to belief and opinion for its sense of security.

The highest intelligence is found in knowing both how and why

The exceptional intelligence of our species enables us to conceive of God, and also it endows us with exceptional mechanical sense that can be applied to everyday physical problems. The two heads in this image symbolise our twin-faceted curiosity to penetrate the mysteries of life, both spiritual and material.

We develop intelligence by the operation of a kind of trial and error process that requires us to collect information, create an hypotheses and then test it. In the material sense such information is typically measurement; in the spiritual sense it tends to be subjective feelings. Yet however esoteric may be our comprehension, we like to reduce all knowledge to exact and efficient formulas. This may be mathematical, it may be religious, but it is formulaic.

If it is not, with very few exceptions, we ourselves are reduced to a fragmentation; we lose sight of the integrating force of our identity and purpose. It is foolish to think of ourselves as either material or spiritual; an any moment we are simultaneously the integrated enactment of both properties of life.

The code by which we live is a marriage of sorts between what works in practice, and our perception of an ideal. The inner and outer faces of reality are then merged into a composite understanding of how life really is.

This is a necessary and effective operation of mind and heart which pulls together the various phases of human experience to have some unity of common purpose. Were we entirely spiritual, we would not know the ‘how’ – and if all-material, we would lack the ‘why’.

There is, beyond this very pragmatic explanation, further motivation for us to develop a capacity for seeing both sides in every issue. It is actually that there is no better achievement for the mind than to do this – its exaltation lies in this ability to approach each moment without the fixity of dogmatic comprehension.

A life is lived in order to gain new experiences, and from these we learn to focus the mind away from confusion and ignorance and towards clarity and understanding. Yet a more subtle aspect of intelligence concerns itself with the unseen, eternal realms. To have both transcendental powers of comprehension, and stereoscopic reasoning ability, enables the birth of genius. We learn to know the why and how of each aspect of our lives.

VIRGO 11 – 15

STABILISATION

There is an important turning-point on the seeker's journey; it is the realisation of the technique by which we create outcomes. At first in concept, and then in practice, we then understand the Game and its rules, so therefore the best strategy for us. We come to stand out amongst the confused and bothered and at times are claimed as their guide or leader. The tokens of respect, recognition and appreciation nudge us to inhabit the role of a spiritual aristocrat.

Coming to terms with physical existence is no small achievement as, from first to last breath, we are compelled to stabilise a great many influences that push and pull us around. Still, even though some of the procedures that shaped us as children may have been intrusive, nonetheless we have gained profound benefits. The projections upon us from our parents, teachers and peers actually helped to build a steady sense of who we are, and what to do. Whether we conform or rebel, the standards that were put in place can act as guidelines, and therefore promote the possibility of aspiring towards excellence. It is both by following, and rejecting, these indicators that we grow strong and pure of motive.

Inevitably some part of our heritage rubs off and is accepted as a set of true principles by which to engage with life. We may well have a desire to improve certain aspects of our family's message; this aim not only delivers a base-line reference point for every one of our choices and responses, it also fosters a more refined quality, an allegiance to subtle, enduring, spiritual realities.

VIRGO 11

A BOY MOULDED IN HIS MOTHER'S ASPIRATION FOR HIM

(EXACTION)

RUDHYAR: IN HER BABY A MOTHER SEES HER DEEP LONGING FOR A SON ANSWERED

CREATIVE VISUALISATION

The world is waiting for us to focus our desire so it can respond and fulfil our dreams

The process by which we call up the circumstances of our life is imagination. We have to learn that all that we are and all that we have is the reflection in form of what we have ardently and consistently imagined. Then we have the greater task to ensure that we only imagine good outcomes. In effect this is the engineering of prayer and, in time, prayers are answered.

To experience itself fully the soul needs a body

As much as the boy is moulded by his mother's vicarious hopes to further her dreams, we are all the embodied projections of our soul's desire. The inner, almost irrevocable, compulsion of our essence-self is the force that brings us into all of our experiences in life.

In contrast to the ego, which inhabits a body, the soul is its own container. In other words the stuff of which it is made is itself what it is. And this stuff is a package of spiritual ideals.

These ideals take on life experiences as if they were clothes – physicality covering naked spirit. Incarnation is the exaction – the price to pay. If a soul wants experience, it needs a body.

There is a kind of immortality implied in the fact of heredity. We pass on what we have inherited, and this refers as much to ideals as genes in our DNA. These so often take the form of possessions and tangible achievements as today's generation furthers the aspirations of yesterday's.

This is the process of evolution, which sponsors current personal excellence by the constantly supportive empowerment that ancestors provide. This includes the raising of awareness, and the skills of creative visioning, as applied to the family's visionary thrust and its continuance into the future. We can, and do, contribute something of ourselves to add to the pot – whether this is the intimate family or the wider social group.

There is no ancestral compulsion implied – we are not required mindlessly to conform to the superficial trappings of allegiance, and any constraints of another's will, even though it may be underscored with very strong parental pressure.

But the price we must pay is that our birth into physical existence is required – with all its trials and sufferings – as a duty of the soul's desire for knowledge of itself.

VIRGO 12

A BRIDE WITH HER VEIL SNATCHED AWAY

(INVITATION)

RUDHYAR: AFTER THE WEDDING, THE GROOM SNATCHES THE VEIL AWAY FROM HIS BRIDE

INITIATION

The mysteries await the ardent seeker to snatch away the veil that has preserved secrets

Having trained the mind to be ever-optimistic and expectant, the power is achieved to unveil what is hidden. Knowledge itself is revealed to the one whose mind is clear and whose eyes are sharp, Yet the seeker may well need to follow a well-trod path of guidance before being capable of meaningful self-determination.

A person is measured by when they push forward and when they back away

When we raise sexuality to the level of sacredness – as in marriage – the twin aspects of passion are made known. The snatching away of modesty is very earthy, yet the seduction of the modesty itself is very spiritual. Forbidden fruit tastes better.

There is a delicate question of balance to be found between passionate purity of motive, and desecration through ill-disciplined lust; what decides the matter is invitation.

Bringing this into more everyday situations – are we honouring the feelings of our fellows? Or do we impose?

Implied within this idea is that whenever we make a choice, we have the capacity to profit from the consequences, in full accordance with the claims we make. Life consistently demands proof of our worth and our intentions, and we are frequently required to snatch away veils, trusting that we are being asked to do so. Our desired fruit never jumps into the mouth of its own accord – and to pick it kills it.

Once we have chosen a path, we need to be fully committed to complete the matter. It is not at all acceptable to lack thrust when your bride is ready for you.

A measure of a person is found, when they feel desire to interact with another, in how well they manage to gauge whether to push forward or back away. We learn to read external clues to listen to what is or is not said, and to have awareness of what intuition suggests. We also notice the effect we have as we gently move towards or away from a situation.

Those who develop sensitivity and wisdom in this are usually rewarded with a life of elegance and abundant joy.

VIRGO 13

A STRONG HAND SUPPLANTING POLITICAL HYSTERIA

(POWER)

RUDHYAR: A POWERFUL STATESMAN OVERCOMES A STATE OF POLITICAL HYSTERIA

THE MAGIC OF CHARISMA

A leader who is open to the down-pouring of cosmic energies gains magnetism and power

Those lacking the clarity and will to train the mind to know the importance of faith become confused and anxious when a crisis looms. Then, to answer collective needs, a leader is thrown up whose faith has been developed to the highest degree of self-confidence and its resultant charisma.

Disorder takes over when affairs are not controlled with firmness and resolve

The only way to fail is to refrain from choice, because then we become victims to the transient events of what is currently unfolding according to someone else's will. Timidity is the loss of opportunity – because in any crisis lays the chance of further self-discovery.

Human personality has a certain weight of influence, which impacts upon the moment at hand, and can significantly contribute to what next occurs.

Politics cannot be avoided. Whenever a group of people operate together, there will be different assessments and visions, which compete with one another to determine which will hold sway and underpin the community's future.

Leaders arise, and often they prove to be deficient, so they must be ousted. Very often, through fear of change, there comes a period of confusion and hysteria, which makes good administration impossible. A strong hand at these times is a force for the good.

Powerful people need to have a consistent grasp on situations so to bring them around in order effectively to dramatise personal potentials – their own, and their supporters.

With power goes responsibility, and the power-possessor must provide for the overall ordering of all the many points in historical progression. No gaps.

There is always a counsel of confusion to take over when events are allowed to drift, so strength can be an asset, even when wisdom is in short supply.

VIRGO 14

A FAMILY TREE

(GENTILITY)

RUDHYAR: AN ARISTOCRATIC FAMILY TREE

ROOTS

True spiritual success answers a deep need for continuance

There is great responsibility attached to the power of faith and charisma; it is inevitable that one with these abilities will be influential and guide those without them into the seeding of what is to come. As leaders we need to be faithful to the collective needs of those we lead with whom on some level we share common roots - which roots are the very authority for our leadership and the source of our strength.

Tradition needs to be accepted and cherished if we are fully to grasp our birth right

Our link with the tradition of our ancestors, described within the family tree, is subtle and profound, and its depth and power are only awakened into full realisation by one with sufficient gentility. It needs to be cultivated, and expressed through the quality of sophistication, which is articulated through good manners and a fine bearing.

As life unfolds, many contrary viewpoints pull us in different directions. Also, there are many relationships pushing us into circles of engagement, so many that we can very easily become confused, swayed and torn. Then it can be difficult to remember who we are and what we stand for.

Yet by keeping faith with our ancestors' ideals, we inherit a possibility of distinction and the unique promise of what we can potentially become. We are connected into an empowering field of progression, but only to the extent that we are willing to continue to live out the ideals that promote this.

Each of us has a complex relationship with mother, father and other ancestors – and assuredly we reject a lot of their behaviours and values as outdated, inappropriate, or even repellent. Yet there are certain innate qualities and copied skills that often define us, and these are the treasures that comprise our true inheritance.

So it is not the false sense of heritage to which we align – not the empty, externalised agitation of fame and fortune. We follow a well-trod path of soul-qualities that have been honed and passed down through generations for us to embrace and further develop. We are challenged and encouraged to make these gifts fully integrated and truly our own.

We need not even study or copy the form of this endowment because in some mystical way the wisdom of our ancestors flows in our blood and can be accessed as an inner experience through their spiritual presence.

How else could humanity evolve? It is not only the 'sins of the fathers' that get passed down; it is also their abilities and knowledge, mother's too. This is the dynamic of life as one generation leads to the next without beginning or end, each respecting what went before as source material for what comes later.

VIRGO 15

AN ORNAMENTAL HANDKERCHIEF

(GRACEFULNESS)

RUDHYAR: A FINE LACE HANDKERCHIEF, HEIRLOOM FROM VALOROUS ANCESTORS

HEIRLOOM

What we achieve is the latest feature that aligns the eternal future with the past

A life is lived so very briefly and could accomplish little were it not part of a chain stretching back into the distant past and forward towards imagined realms of future possibility. Our past experiences and allegiances, in the sense of family ancestors or previous incarnation, contain the strands we weave to create a character that defines and expresses who we are now. The accomplished seeker has the demeanour of aristocracy because they have the awareness of this spiritual ancestry. In some tangible way this is certain to be recognised by the bestowal of some honour.

Grace commands worldly sophistication and demonstrates our spiritual progression

Ornaments can be trifles of no consequence, used by the pretentious person to insinuate themselves into a better social class, believing, rather pompously, to be able to raise their status by adopting the trappings of position.

Yet these very items can be invested with extraordinary power, and true worth. Their value is in how they preserve meaning and so help to perfect action.

We think of a knight, who would carry his lady's handkerchief as a talisman of the spirit. His sacred chivalry was invoked, and no doubt made him a better person and probably a more passionate warrior. The talisman was always soft, to appeal to his sense of beauty, and awaken his instinctual awareness of the feminine side that made his fierce actions graceful, and actually much more meaningful.

Gracefulness is an exceptional level of charm, which is a form of power and tends to support high achievement.

It speaks to a higher reality to which we aspire. Each of us yearns for something to which we append our highest sense of meaning, or sacredness, and the allegiance that we offer in service to this has the effect of reinvigorating our very effort.

Grace is both a tool of, and evidence of, our spiritual progress. It brings a refinement in our manner, our perceptions, our relationships and purposes – and refinement is evidence of greater perfection.

Without some sense of higher meaning, we become lost in life. We need to serve something higher – and that requires us generally to adopt the manners of that higher something.

VIRGO 16 – 20

CULTIVATION

Knowledge is within us and is brought into consciousness through our process of experiencing ourselves as we come up against others. When we are guided, then this knowledge is led out, and that is the purpose of education. True knowing occurs only as we find balance, between thinking and feeling, between doing and being, and rise above any attachment to either. This involves embracing our darker side, blowing off occasionally, learning how to seek inner guidance and how to discriminate between the profound and the false. We need to work at it with real individual effort, and yet at times put immediate self-interest on hold in order to be part of a collective shared purpose.

Life gives us opportunity to develop, to enjoy and to express ourselves fully in accordance with the fullest reach of our imagination – yet it does not insist that we do much more than survive. At a certain level of being, we can just function as animals do, and in fact most people also do, and provide themselves with food, shelter and a mate. However, we are also capable of the discovery of greater talents – creative passion, clever insights and extreme self-pointedness for example – and we learn that these abilities generate abundant rewards.

This significantly depends upon how well we deepen our comprehension of life's mysterious operating principles. Those who actually manage to put in the effort to cultivate skills and understanding will find that life becomes richer and more colourful, and indeed inevitably happier in the long run. So the courageous and the innocent will place themselves in harm's way trusting that all will be well in the end, and that such apparently reckless behaviour, though it may well occasionally lead to misfortune and disenchantment, is a condition of growth.

VIRGO 16

AN ORANG-UTAN

(DEXTERITY)

RUDHYAR: IN THE ZOO, CHILDREN ARE BROUGHT FACE TO FACE WITH AN ORANGUTAN

THE WILDNESS WITHIN US

It is futile to ignore that we all have a wild beast within

The ideal to which humanity aspires is described by words such as goodness, truth, justice and loving kindness, yet within each one of us is a residual force of our primitive nature, the animal-self that has no sense of right and wrong, no conscience and little or no self-awareness. Thus arises all conflict in the realm of human activity - both the inner ambiguities and the outer clashings and bangings that make the news headlines. Until we face up to this honestly and deal with it wisely then there will be suffering.

Freedom and power can so often hinge on harnessing primal forces skilfully

The powerful primate reminds us of our primitive strength, and potential for animal violence – yet also the unthinking, instinctual, adroitness that we never lose. Processes of human evolution have brought such raw passions into check, but the thin leash of civilisation is all that contains the beast.

We simply have no idea what may occur in our lives, and there is a part of us that will never let go of our primal capacity to cope with whatever unexpected dangers we may have to face. We always have more strength than we normally realise – and it comes forth if called up by any threatening circumstances of Nature.

However much we try to build our lives to be safe and cosy, we may occasionally, unwittingly, attract challenges that stimulate the animal self into action – since as much as it is the creative life-force, Nature is no less a compelling force of decay and destruction.

Unavoidably, there always comes a time when we simply must let go of our civilised attempt to control it by transforming its essence-power into intelligence and conscious choice. Then, letting go, we experience our own nature stripped of conscience and the self-imposition of courteous behaviour; stripped to essentials, we stand capable and strong – and feel proud that we can.

In meeting the demands of life, each of us cultivates our innate force so that it can adapt to circumstances with dexterity. This is required to maintain any degree of influence and independence.

We are assisted in this self-refinement by the processes of social feedback that dissuade us from, and even punish us for, any self-justification in crudity or violence.

We learn neither to deny, nor to allow, the beast within. Our maturity as individuals is found through becoming able to access primal forces and apply them appropriately within a social milieu. In a civilised context, this is more likely to be the expression of the passion that when thwarted gives rise to violence, rather than the physical violence itself.

VIRGO 17

A VOLCANO IN ERUPTION

(EXPLOSION)

RUDHYAR: A VOLCANIC ERUPTION

CATHARSIS

In order to transcend the animal nature, we must release pent up frustrations

The Earth has tensions that release by volcanic eruptions; in the same way, so too does the human psyche occasionally blow off to release pent-up energies. Though this behaviour is often disruptive and sometimes destructive, nevertheless it is healthier than the alternative. Without it the psyche would be in danger of catastrophic breakdown or falling into the frozen attitude of an automaton, slavishly obedient to imposed constraints.

We need to reconnect with the irresistible, essential creative life force deep within

On occasion, we need to clear ourselves absolutely of any imperfections of authenticity, by rejecting completely anything in our lives that is not representative of our true selves. This refusal of superficiality is an aspect of the genuine reordering of self that supports creativity; it can be truly passionate in expression.

To take it to the level of petulance and temper tantrums would be foolish and ineffectual.

The urge is much deeper than silly emotionality – it is a reconstitution of reality in its most essential terms so that we can properly engage our deepest desires to rework the detailed aspects of our circumstances.

Sometimes we need to experience the creative forces of physical life – the volcanic explosion that makes stone from fire – as an inner reality. Life has a blind urge to be. No amount of civilizing can stop that, and we need to remember ourselves as part of that passion if we are to know who and what we really are.

Certain aspects of our potential are locked up within, and can only be brought to light after a cathartic and irresistible outburst of energy, which is needed to mobilise inner creative forces.

After certain critical phases of life experience, such an outburst can potentially trigger extreme wonderment and yet also blind destructiveness. This can raise us up to a new level of engagement and commitment to self-projection.

The very core expression of our reality, our external vitality, is rarely shown, yet nothing is truer, nothing more effective. Sometimes in response to dire emergency, sheer natural violence is the only valid action to resolve a major issue.

VIRGO 18

A OUIJA BOARD

(ACUMEN)

RUDHYAR: A OUIJA BOARD

INTUITION

Consulting the oracle is risky; the inner voice cannot easily be separated from desire

Knowledge is not complete unless both the rational and non-rational aspects are considered. In the modern world we can see that greater emphasis is placed on scientific method yet, though a minority, esotericists have also kept pace with an evolution of consciousness associated with the more intuitive, right brain approach. This image is rather outdated - the Ouija Board provided guidance of a sort - yet could very easily offer silly or false commentary. If we consult an oracle we are advised to be ultra-careful to balance intuition with reason; the words of an oracle can carry surprisingly significant weight and could easily influence outcomes as a kind of self-fulfilling prophesy.

Creative sensitivity leads towards deep and subtle knowledge of the true nature of reality

The use of tools of magic has its dangers. Very often, those of weak mind will surrender their will to the forces that manipulate them into bondage when they get caught up in their superstition and distorted perceptions of subtle realities.

However, to the savvy, such tools can be employed very meaningfully to develop real skills such that their inclinations and insights serve them every step of the way towards the realisation of their full acumen.

Thus, inner comprehension becomes activated into outer form, which is of the utmost importance since our values and strengths are made known only as they are given material expression.

This does depend upon a keen determined intelligence that can sense the difference between true insight and cosmic silliness.

The future does not arise suddenly as if out of the blue – it creates itself by rearranging existing streams of energy and form. Strands of the future are evident here and now – to those who look for and notice them and thus interpret their meaning. We can depend upon these myriad signatures of coming events – what must be must be.

However, what may be may also not be. Optimisation depends upon expanding our sensitivity to a greater degree so that it encompasses illimitable life potentials in every situation and does not fixate upon one particular expected or preferred version. It is all too easy to warp our perceptions to fit our desires.

When we learn how to participate in true and rational divination, the completeness of our experience of life becomes steady and whole. Neither logic nor spiritual insight can give the whole truth because each needs to be married with the other to give birth to any real understanding.

VIRGO 19

A SWIMMING RACE

(ELIMINATION)

RUDHYAR: A SWIMMING RACE

ROLE MODEL

More advanced beings compete with themselves towards mastery

Pursuit of excellence is mostly associated with competition, yet the more advanced seeker tends to employ emulation as a more productive stirring-to-action. Swimming takes us to the water and here is used in metaphor to describe attempts to master the watery psychic realms. It must not be thought that only the gifted can access their deeper intuition, it is a natural human facility that we all can awaken and develop - and to do this we may find it beneficial to emulate a more realised person, one who has opened the ability to see into hidden areas.

Competition promotes the focus and excellence needed to grasp every opportunity

The treasure of individuality is the ultimate gift that this life offers. We are not the same as anyone else, although there are social processes of control and conditioning that seek to make us so. These grinding pressures need to be eliminated through the study and practice of personal excellence. A race supports this well but any intense personal challenge can also work. There is otherwise a real danger of inadequate self-dramatisation – by which we lose opportunities to grasp this treasure of uniqueness.

On all levels the balance of life is found through instability. Survival itself, and certainly the pursuit of excellence and effectiveness, require us to recognise within ourselves the exact best response to the demands of every changing situation. We expand our skills, experience and understanding only when we are stretched.

Each factor of being contributes to the whole organism's highest state of operation – so each part needs to be frequently re-awakened, and tested, through the constant demands of movement. Only thus can we learn to appreciate how the overall best and harmonious outcome is a function of various components of self.

Competition has long been practised as an activity that stimulates the individual to achieve their best. Typically we train, we take on new skills, and we develop the right mental and emotional attitude, so that we can do our very best against an opponent who is equally prepared. When skilful hunting was a survival question, competitions were less necessary. Now controlled competitiveness is an effective channel for such energies.

As a result of such self-training, we can become very pointed of focus. This clarity of inclination is powerful and certain to open up opportunities of further self-evolution and projection. The absence of such focus is the single most important reason for any disappointment and loss of direction.

Any imperfection in our clarity of desire or precision of focus will render us subject to the whims and fancies of an external world that is callously indifferent to our wants and needs. Therefore divergence and dissipation occurs, through which we lose our sense of who we truly are.

Whatever we may have been encouraged to believe, through pressures to conform, life is utterly impartial. No vision, no impulse, no ambition, and no desire is rejected. Whatever we focus on clearly and unambiguously is attracted into our life circumstances whether or not approved of by the world – as long as we approve of it.

VIRGO 20

AN AUTOMOBILE CARAVAN

(VARIETY)

RUDHYAR: A CARAVAN OF CARS HEADED TO THE WEST COAST

COOPERATION

To optimise effort and gain the best results we need to work together with kindred spirits

Going beyond personal ambitions of self-realisation we then seek out others on the same journey and align ourselves to a collective goal. Reality is a gestalt - what is real somewhere is real everywhere, as above so below - so at the deepest reach of human consciousness we cannot be fully realised until and unless everyone else is too. Anyway, it makes good sense to share our journey because synergistic gains accrue and it's more enjoyable.

Through travel and adventure, we gain knowledge of the world's great diversity

Very often, in the summer holiday season, we see on the roads any number of towed caravans – temporary mini-homes for adventurers courageously going out to meet the world. In a different time and place, caravans of camels went forth to trade and in so doing created a network that carried in addition to goods the exchange of languages, knowledge and ideas.

Modern life is typified by the variety and great multiplicity of facilities we have devised in order to inspect and enjoy the extravagance of Nature's beauty using civilisation's ingenuity to do so. Now most of our knowledge of the natural world is derived through the technology of television and computers.

We have all been encouraged to expand our expectations and claim more and better rewards for the work we do and the skills we develop. Although the consumerist side to this phenomenon is questionable, the expansion of expectation is evidence of consciousness expressed.

In our civilised times, experience itself is ever on the move – spiraling outward to embrace as much of the world as can be imagined. And the imagination of our species is moving away from life-denying poverty and grind towards life-affirming exploration and adventure.

The modern individual takes full advantage of the encouragement and the possibility to further their own reach, and enjoys undreamed-of realms of possibility. These journeys of exploration have life-impacting ramifications; through them we grow and discover who we are. There is no comparison between the vicarious experience gained through internet reporting and real-life involvement.

We have exceptional capacity for this expansion, seemingly endless, and each new achievement becomes the foundation platform for the next dimension of expectancy. The broadening of the mind is the deepening of consciousness, and indeed life's main purpose, which is made possible only when meeting new scenarios.

Despite the inherent risk of permanent restlessness and facile improvidence, this expansive self-rewarding profligacy brings to our door the whole cosmos. For all its great errors and debased side-effects, the era of wealth and consumerism has exponentially developed our knowledge of the material world's great diversity and profusion. And of course with this comes a greater sense of personal fulfilment.

VIRGO 21 – 25

MODESTY

Learning how to become a better person is central to the seeker's path, in a sense it is the outer part of our training, the proof that our spiritual practices are being properly assimilated. We need to be part of a group at times in order to touch into states of consciousness that we cannot reach alone. By doing so and exercising great strength of will we can elevate ourselves individually to an aristocratic condition and then attract both the duties and the social recognition required to fulfil them. The danger of egotism needs to be offset by a deepening of innocence and, invariably, service. The fruits of our inner work are twofold - the outer attainments may well attract glory for a while, yet the inner benefits have eternal value.

Modesty is a spiritual mystery, understood more in the East, where the veiling of one's power and beauty are seen to enhance them, and an excessive expression of ego is an expenditure that the prudent person prefers to limit. As we serve, so we hone our awareness. Eventually it becomes clear that there is an underlying meaning to life that makes sense of all the trials and disappointments.

The ultimate self-help is best expressed as concern for something higher – in fact the highest we can conceive – because oddly we capitalise most fully and quickly upon life's opportunities as we offer ourselves in renunciation; indeed it is thus that we master ourselves. This knowledge is somewhat counter-intuitive, at least to the underdeveloped person, and yet its discovery is something of a eureka experience; it just makes so much sense to the spiritually-evolved person. Both resoluteness and artlessness – self-proclamation and renunciation – are useful as they weave together into an almost transcendental state of grace, which paradoxically celebrates and negates ego simultaneously.

VIRGO 21

A GIRLS' BASKETBALL TEAM

(EXPRESSION)

RUDHYAR: A GIRLS' BASKETBALL TEAM

RECEPTIVITY TO COLLECTIVE FORCES

Putting aside competitive, individual goals we can tune into higher forces

Certain dimensions of consciousness are not readily accessed in an individual and require a group to focus single-pointedly in order to reach them. When the group integrates its members harmoniously and has a well-defined, specific goal the 'group soul' can be experienced, and it is somewhat realised in each participating individual. The individual is thus raised up.

We reach ultimate self-representation only with the help of others

There are real and important limits on our willingness to get involved with projects and people. Basically, unless we find something of vital consequence to ourselves, it is hard to serve another's ambitions.

The image of a sports team leads us to consider that we are part of something bigger, and we need not do everything ourselves. We have friends with similar purposes and complementary skills and knowledge. Our personal limitations can be overcome with the help of members of our team.

Not only is it enjoyable to engage in common effort towards a shared goal with shared rewards, it is also spiritually appropriate and intuitively valid.

Also, it is how higher realities can be brought into manifestation. Spiritual teachings must often be made into physical expression through groups rather than individuals, because it requires greater diversity and strength to deal with larger issues.

It is not at all comfortable constantly to consult and relate to team-mates, so one danger ever at hand is listless conformity. The wisdom to gain here is of the importance of active cooperation rather than passive acceptance in all matters of wider consequence.

In order to resonate this wisdom at a higher level, we must accept the need, in response to unpredicted developments, for constant self-refinement such that true and profound specialisation may take place. Each member of *Team Humanity* has their own skill set, upon which others depend. We are therefore authorised to take the initiative to express our particular skills and understandings on behalf of the community.

It matters not whether this or that skill is developed – and the choice is unlimited – as long as we express our true nature to the ultimate degree that we can master. Opportunities usually arise, and must be grasped in a timely way. And if they do not arise, then we simply have to learn to adapt to what is available and deepen our involvements with the expression of further attributes.

VIRGO 22

A ROYAL COAT OF ARMS

(PREROGATIVE)

RUDHYAR: A ROYAL COAT OF ARMS ENRICHED WITH PRECIOUS STONES

RESPONSIBILITY OF HIGH OFFICE

Each generation must have exemplars of the community's highest sense of itself

Aristocracy in the political sense is the worldly reflection of the condition of an elevated soul. Kings were once the genuine spiritual leaders of their countries, and even today royalty is accorded heightened respect partly because of the sense of nobility and spiritual integrity that they are thought to carry. As we progress spiritually we tend more and more to take on the burden of being an example to others to conduct themselves with such integrity. To do so requires that we consistently resonate at the aristocratic level of soul consciousnesses.

With age, we gain greater inner authority; this speaks to us of the aristocracy of self

In order to have a coat of arms, a family has to have impressive ancestry – and through this they assert authority and claim the prerogative of special importance. Right is being dramatised as a privilege worthy of sustainment, and is demonstrably sustained in this emblem of high aristocracy.

So often, unfortunately, the position is abused for the subtle manipulation of the unwary or the disempowered. We see examples in history, and even today, wherever the power-possessors keep the people down by making claims of self-importance.

And yet, for all its dangers and the questionable implication of inherent inequality between people through accident of birth, the establishment of royalty brings great dignity to the experience of life. This dignification process is enacted by and through the customs and laws by which the community conducts its affairs.

The observance of these rules and values has to be enforced by an elite body whose committed function is social stewardship – and, in this example, that falls to those of a particular bloodline. Times and places change, and royalty is perhaps put aside in favour of presidency, yet the principle is eternal – someone needs to accept the burden of responsibility to maintain standards.

It is inevitable that the elite group of stewards will have the duty and gift to bring together all in common purpose and united stability. This projects a future of betterment, a vision of hope and prosperity for all.

In older, simpler communities, this function fell to the elders. They were custodians of the common-sense regulation of life, and were treated with great respect for their wisdom, their knowledge of old ways, their suffering and their achievements.

This hints at a subtle mystery – that just by staying alive, each of us gains greater and greater authority. Our own station as elder, our own emblems of position, and our own inner sense of knowledge of past and future, speak to us of an eternal aristocracy of self.

VIRGO 23

AN ANIMAL TRAINER

(RESOLUTENESS)

RUDHYAR: A LION TAMER DISPLAYS HIS SKILL AND CHARACTER

OVERCOMING PRIDEFUL SELF-LOVE

Patience and self-control are prerequisites for spiritual advancement

Taming the beast within us is a requirement if we are to maintain an aristocratic demeanour. The darker aspects of our nature, which are never to be denied or defeated, must be brought under the control of the will. This means we cannot ever relax our guard fully and will always be tested for tenacity and forbearance.

Great self-discipline, patience and skill are all required to tame the inner beast

The organic integrity of the world at large depends upon the certainty of the order of things. In this case, we are considering one incontrovertible rule – discipline controls passion. There is one way to tame the inner beast, only one. It requires carefully-managed personal accomplishments, with a patient resoluteness of being.

However, it is well worth the effort since, when we find the power to control our animal side, we can enlist the full package of natural resources allocated to us, which we will then find entirely adequate for us to fulfil all of our needs and desires.

Humanity has the gift of influence – we can impose our ideas upon lesser forms of life by interweaving our skills into another's reality. It can be an animal, although it applies also in the form where the charismatic person holds sway over the dullard.

There is a warning in this: control is inevitable; we need to choose whether to impose or be imposed upon. Every individual is subject to controlling processes in their experience of life – and if we fail to give conscious attention to our potential to influence outcomes, then this probably leads towards a conditioned existence.

It is usually futile to show off or boast about our power and talents – this is often proof that we have indeed succumbed to the conditioning. Self-proclamation has its advantages at times, but certainly not as an attempt at avoidance of the processes of personal clearing.

Certain life imperatives rule us all; whether to be master or slave is usually a big one. We are required to dominate or be dominated, and for those of us who find this choice uncomfortable, we will probably end up reluctantly submissive or ineffectually rebellious.

There is but one exception to this general rule – where we have escaped conditioning finally, having completed a deep process of healing and introspection; this is followed by masterly self-control and the resultant passionate, focused, intentionality of being.

VIRGO 24

MARY AND HER WHITE LAMB

(ARTLESSNESS)

RUDHYAR: MARY AND HER LITTLE LAMB

THE SPIRITUAL PRACTICE OF INNOCENCE

As we progress spiritually we radiate childlike qualities and purity of spirit

Despite having a nobility of demeanour and powerful will the more advanced seeker is able to radiate innocence and purity, holding on to a childlike simplicity of being. This protects us from attachment to pride and also softens all the situations we encounter adding a spontaneity and lightness of being to life.

A positive, expectant approach to life generally promotes stability

Each of us is entirely responsible for making sense of all of our outer experiences on the inner, subjective level. It is a measure of our self-adequacy whether or not we are able to do this well enough to take care of our wants and needs, and indeed to sponsor happiness. Naivety can be the impractical failure to face up to the hard facts of reality, or it can be beautiful innocence. To learn which of these two interpretations is more accurate for us, a lot depends upon whether, and how well, we are coping with life. Can we take care of ourselves so that we feel secure and happy?

The potential exists for us to find something that makes worthwhile every involvement and each relationship. It is evidence of a true ingenious creativity that we manage to do so. A young child usually finds something to play with and enjoy, so that each moment is valid in itself; adults so often lose this ability, so when we find one who can hold on to such youthful beauty, perhaps we should celebrate them. There's enough cynicism in the world – so a bit of childish fun is welcome surely, especially if present within a competent individual?

The image of a little girl, artlessly playing with an innocent baby animal, is a clue to this facility within us. This is a stabilizing facility, and is what promotes a positive, expectant approach to people and to life generally.

As adults, we are conscientious, even industrious, about optimising the full expression of our capacities, striving and struggling to do this against external forces and personal insufficiency. Yet the child's wide-eyed expectation of the free-flow of goodness, truth and purity is not a lesser wisdom.

The opposite is the case; we all need such clear optimism. Holding awareness of such a childlike anticipation is a remedy for confusion, cynicism and an inner dividedness of focus.

And yet we must not allow such naivety to degenerate into witless fancy – where the loss of true spirit and the absence of mature understanding will give rise to nothing more than empty-headedness.

This is not the wisdom of escapism – because there is no wisdom in escapism; it is the wisdom of trust – a totally different quality.

VIRGO 25

A FLAG AT HALF-MAST

(RESPECT)

RUDHYAR: A FLAG AT HALF-MAST IN FRONT OF A PUBLIC BUILDING

COMMUNITY APPROVAL

Spiritual seekers seek to earn the approval of the public for having met their needs

The measure of our attainment is so often the recognition of our community. Whatever imperfections of character we may have demonstrated in life these faults are not generally recorded in history; our social achievements are. We are remembered and celebrated beyond the span of our days according to how profoundly well we were able to serve the collective needs of our community.

Any individual who, in service, transcends the ego, is rewarded above all by self-fulfilment

This is a symbol of the exceptional level of respect that is paid to an individual who has managed to transcend selfhood and achieve noteworthy success in service to their community. It is given as a reward for dedication, which has proved worthy through continued, sustained effort. Yet the deeper reward is experienced first and last by the individual as self-fulfilment.

For the common individual in public service, there is no higher recognition than such an honour. It shows they have achieved success and found a deep resonance with their life and times, adding a new level of breadth or depth to express and further some aspect of the community's purposes.

The coin by which to measure the substance of personality is reputation. As any person is raised in repute, so the community grows in its wealth of values, since appreciation elevates both giver and receiver. It is in society's best interests therefore to show recognition towards those who personify its values. In the everyday-and-ordinary sense this is most often measured in money and influence; yet when the person has done something very special indeed, then the country's essence-emblem, its flag, is used to demonstrate honouring.

It is the ultimate justification of personality when it is celebrated immortally as having contributed to history. Then it is upheld as much in death as in life.

It is achievement that is rewarded, not qualities. Ideals alone are not enough to impress others; effectiveness is required too. An idea or impeccable lifestyle is of no general consequence until it impacts upon the community, so the person of note is inspired and obliged to dedicate exceptional effort to overcome all the challenges that arise, and certainly they will also need to win the support of other key players in society in some way.

Inevitably, life throws up its own self-judgements – it can be hard, even harsh, on those whose attempts to serve history fail to become more than a rather superficial self-dramatisation. The weapons of ridicule and scapegoating are employed against any would-be celebrity who fails. Society's judgements are ruthless, which is why it is no small thing to become profoundly and widely recognised for achievement.

The question in every exchange is whether respect is confidently demanded, or humbly earned. It would be folly to assume that either strategy is always appropriate. Sometimes very worthwhile people use the unlovely expedient of arrogance to insist upon proper treatment so that they can further the community's purposes.

VIRGO 26 – 30

PERFECTING

In order to escape this world of lies we cannot simply choose a path of undisciplined escapism, in fact we need to reach an extremely competent attitude of being that enables us to perform rituals 'exactly so' in both the spiritual and social context. Then we become powerful, strong-willed and indifferent to collective pressure, able to dance to the music that only we can hear and become deaf to the siren-call of pleasures and habits. Though humble enough to serve we must become confident enough to lead and also detached enough to walk the first lonely steps of a pioneer. The path of finding Truth is the path of finding oneself and is at times almost impossibly demanding.

Precision and a thorough attention to detail are aspects of perfectionism, and found useful when a task simply must be properly performed, with no margin for error, and no room for imperfection. Since most of us are somewhat uncomfortable with the unpredictability of the future, we often attempt to control events through having precise established routines, and anticipating unseen possibilities assiduously. We can, in this way, develop impressive acumen and learn how to concentrate on the matter at hand with perseverance and care.

Whatever can be destroyed or tarnished is not true – because Truth is essence, beyond corruption. This also can be applied to personality – where the certainty of authentic self-identification is the prise of integrity. It can only ever be truly developed, and tested for its authenticity, when we serve. We find that, by surrendering the lesser aspects of personality through offering to care for another, we are quite able to put aside our smaller personal agenda – and then we discover the path to spiritual grace, which is the perfection of self.

VIRGO 26

BOY WITH A CENSER

(RAPTURE)

RUDHYAR: A BOY WITH A CENSER SERVES THE PRIEST NEAR THE ALTAR

SACRED DUTY OF SERVICE

To function on Earth, discarnate spiritual beings need from us exact performance of ritual

At times we all touch sacredness, whether in the presence of Nature's beauty, the birth of a baby or in death. Yet we can also attend at rituals where we achieve the state of sacredness by performing very specific actions with intense concentration and an attitude of service and humility. This is a transcendental condition during which we participate in the conscious spiritual evolution of our species, the Earth and the Cosmos.

The highest rapture can be found in ceremonial celebration of spirituality

Our claims are greatly empowered and defined through ritual. The perfecting of life lies in making every part sacred, and we have to know that we ourselves build sacredness, and also how to do so. Ritual burning of incense goes with chanting, lighting of altar candles and kneeling in prayer, as examples of methods to create an atmosphere of sacredness, and rapture is both the precondition and the result of impeccable sacredness.

Although this is done within a community context, nevertheless such an activity has an individual dimension – since it is thus that the practitioner initiates their personal claim on the world. Each person one meets can be encouraged to resonate at a higher vibration, through ceremony and sacredness. Such encouragement acts as a claim since the energy of their awakened sacredness is directed first towards the claimant.

We must dedicate ourselves fully to this task if it is to be effective; achievement of purpose is entirely dependent upon the degree of our perception of self-worthiness for such an elevated process. This is our best work and is not to be diminished by the restrictive fears of false modesty; it is optimised by unlimited faith.

If involvement is not total, if we do not overcome laziness or apathy, if passion is dull – then the ritual is empty and no deep remembrance will occur of the soul's perfect and innocent condition. A cake without the icing.

This whole story is about remembering how to awaken the support of the subtle forces that are beyond scientific measurement – often described as God's work. Whether we see the highest as within us or separate, still we have a more complete claim on life when we recall it. It behoves us to find the words by which to call upon the highest; one method is to learn mantra and the holy names.

Spiritual activity is so often practiced as a group interaction. This is explained by the intuitive knowledge that nothing may actually be fully owned by an individual. All is shared, in both material and subtle realities. We optimise our personal evolution by placing a high degree of importance on spiritual communion.

Evidence of success – that we have somehow found a state of grace where self-demonstration and self-abnegation are both transcended – is found in our ability freely and at a moment's notice to practice the condition of rapture. Most committed celebrants have daily rituals of prayer and devotion by which to remember and practice, and routinely participate in gatherings with kindred spirits to further this ability.

VIRGO 27

GRANDE DAMES AT TEA

(APLOMB)

RUDHYAR: A GROUP OF ARISTOCRATIC LADIES MEET CEREMONIALLY AT A COURT'S FUNCTION

RITUALISED MUNDANE LIFE

Tradition is revered and the mind is centred practising everyday functions as ritual

There are rituals carried out in society, especially high society, that relate to the manner of dress, of conversion, of taking food and of celebration. These hold in pace certain qualities that are otherwise lost - such things as dignity, elegance, respect for tradition and hierarchy, and such like. They also expose rebelliousness and dissension and so help protect the status quo and support the pursuit of excellence.

May future generations always have better prospects than we ourselves inherited

Selfhood is the current, momentary focus of attention that we claim as our inward orientation. It is a highly concentrated set of values and experiences, and it derives as much from inherited racial assets as from anything uniquely personal.

The traditions of one generation are always available to structure, underpin and strengthen the next. This does not deny our uniqueness of individualism; it merely helps to explain and enhance it.

The grande dames are no doubt raising china cups to drink their tea, pinkies fashionably angled to display their social status as upper middle class, with their precious aplomb perfected by repeated practice. They learned all this from their mothers and ancestors, going back before time. And they will pass on their values through their offspring, assuring themselves of an effective continuance throughout the ages.

We all do this, although perhaps not in such an effete manner. However, unless we decide to be, we are not actually constrained by this background continuity of how reality should be interpreted and projected. The threshold of aliveness is in the instant we awaken to the controversial discovery of new ways to take tea.

We must endeavour to pass on to future generations more than we have received, and our gains need to be captured and presented to posterity. We have more to experience in life than the karmic payback of past indiscretions and services rendered, and are here to be creative and further the range of human articulation.

Special privileges can so easily be squandered and selfishly enjoyed – but a person of aplomb will administer their inheritance for the greater good of their people, whether this is measured in material or spiritual terms. They do so as the foundation for further progressive elaboration in generations to come.

Even apparently common experiences like taking tea contain a volume of information about humanity's evolutionary history. It is for us to make our own common experiences speak as eloquently about the future, and use our traditions mindfully as the springboard for new ways to express human potential.

VIRGO 28

A BALD HEADED MAN

(DOMINANCE)

RUDHYAR: A BALD-HEADED MAN WHO HAS SEIZED POWER

MAKING A CLAIM

At times we feel impelled to take action even at the cost of disturbing the status quo

The time always eventually comes for changing the old ways because they are outworn and unsustainable. The power necessary to upset the order is very often focused in one person whose strength of will and clarity of intent are exceptional. Such a force cannot be contained by collective resistance, and loyalty to the past; it creates such an intensification of vital energy that old structures crack, old standards are thrown out and new ways find a foothold and begin their time.

When we have the better hand, we should play it

The image is evocative of a particular type of individual who is completely in control; he never lets his hair down. We observe here that, in one who has mastered their emotions, the tendency is very strong to dominate others.

Sometimes this is done too forcefully. It is not appropriate in any normal aspect of human experience for a person to take sadistic delight in becoming a scourge of his fellows. Such behaviour is evidence of unresolved childhood issues, however sophisticated may be the dressing that cloaks the bully – which incidentally is very often the suit or uniform.

However, often by taking control we are called upon to serve the interests of others – who will enjoy a richer and more enjoyable life as a direct result of our asserting authority.

Whatever special excellence we develop will be challenged – events arising will test our capacity to hold sway; personal attainment requires this. In any situation, when we have the better hand, we should play it – even against dissenters.

A self-disciplined expert, master of their craft, has a certain kind of character – with a drive of personal power that can create or advance widespread opportunities for community.

Social conscience calls upon us never to neglect our fellows. To avoid the chance to create benefit amounts to neglect, therefore we are obliged to take command whenever we see the potential community benefit in doing so.

The way to avoid the risks of over-forceful leadership is to take simple satisfaction on an inner level instead of the outer. Rather than look for manifestation of worldly power, we can feel the condition within of being in a state of self-mastery – and let our resulting dominance of others take its inevitable course in the world as gently as possible.

VIRGO 29

MAN GAINING SECRET KNOWLEDGE FROM A PAPER HE IS READING

(DISCOVERY)

RUDHYAR: A SEEKER AFTER OCCULT KNOWLEDGE READS AN ANCIENT SCROLL WHICH ILLUMINES HIS MIND

ANCIENT KNOWLEDGE AS FOUNDATION FOR CHANGE

We need to pay attention to the eternal secrets constructing new realities

Revolution is not necessarily evolution. The tendency is always strong simply to repeat old patterns and return to the same entropic condition - though called bu a different name and with different actors. At times of crisis when order itself has broken down we must tap into the fundamental ordering of the cosmos and assert the eternal patterns of truth. These must be accessed personally at first and then shared openly so that collective acceptance and alignment can occur.

Wisdom must be discovered, not furnished

Wisdom is not at all apparent. The ways of knowledge are hidden by two primary factors: The first is inherent within the very nature of knowledge – mysteries are undisclosed because they are undisclosable. Secondly, the secrets of life are kept secret by the cognoscenti – those who are in the know like to retain their influence.

Yet – as the image indicates – it is our business to derive meaning from what we are exposed to in the various media. Reading between the lines, with an expanded level of comprehension, we will see the broader picture and gain access to the abiding, if hidden, truths by which communal stability is established.

Interactions, between those who know and those who do not, are often constrained in order to protect secrets. This hints at the fundamental conservatism of our world. The realm of our experiences is given form by a particular culture, which is best preserved by maintaining fixity in shared beliefs. The spread of new ideas, whether evolutionary or revolutionary, which would take place if secrets were revealed, is seen by some as a threat to our way of life.

The conservative majority absolutely refuses to surrender their heritage unnecessarily.

Anyway, wisdom must be discovered, not handed to us on a plate. There is, within any lesser experience, a greater one hiding and, to reveal its greater glory, each of us has the responsibility to expand the wisdom in any situation according to our own individual perceptions of reality and its inherent potentials.

Were we to lap up the pap delivered to us by the sensationalist, materialist media, then, through lazy supposition, we would lose integrity of mind, surrender common sense, and serve the machinery of deception as docile victims. This applies to papers of all types.

Our freedom from ignorance is surely invested in imagination, that splendid and powerful gift so valued by all children, which cannot survive into adulthood without conscious effort to sustain and develop it. With imagination and persistence, we can penetrate through the obscurities and find clarity and the intrinsic depth of truth contained within anything, even those papers whose messages are veiled by deceit and secret codes.

VIRGO 30

A FALSE CALL UNHEARD IN ATTENTION TO IMMEDIATE SERVICE

(SAFEGUARD)

RUDHYAR: TOTALLY INTENT UPON COMPLETING AN IMMEDIATE TASK, A MAN IS DEAF TO ANY ALLUREMENT

PENETRATIVE CONCENTRATION OF ATTENTION

Having found the gate to the secret garden, we must strike boldly and not be distracted

A crucial step for the seeker to take is the grasping of personal self-confidence. This is indistinguishable from faith and is completed by the process of assumption. Faith in oneself is required in order to trust the inner voice of truth, and exclude all else from the mind. A distracted mind cannot break through to new levels of being as it is drawn and torn by the illusions of the world.

A life that is based on principles and practices cultivates gravitas and understanding

We all make mistakes, but life really doesn't allow us to consistently apply witless indiscretion. There are so many false calls – just turn on the television – and we have to tune them out by focusing attention on the immediacy of the matter at hand. This ability is our safeguard.

It is the nature of things that we be seduced into inappropriate service by the deceiving tongues of liars and rogues – and therefore it is our normal responsibility to recognise and avoid that dead-end path. In business this idea is expressed as *caveat emptor* – buyer beware! The ability is not vouchsafed to the foolish.

Extending this idea, each one of us has to create a place in life among like-minded souls and heart-connected friends. If we are duped into false fellowship, this will never happen.

Safeguard comes from integrity. We need to achieve a way of living, based on principles and practices, which leads towards an absoluteness of attitude, and profundity of understanding. Then, and only then, we will be ever protected on our path – safe from both confusion and scoundrels.

With this life attitude, circumstances somehow seem to shape themselves for our convenience and encouragement. In all we do, we are supported and guided.

There is a secret in this – an esoteric mystery. Our sense of the soul's immortality is both the reason, and the reward, for human responsibility. Given free will, the only appropriate course is one of supreme integrity. This is not only because we have eternity in which to reap the fruits of our sowing – that type of thinking is only slightly above the animal kingdom. It is because it is the right thing to do. Trusted, we surely must become trustworthy – to be clear of conscience.

Happiness itself, in other words fulfilment and exceptional self-gratification, depends upon integrity – and is its prise.

LIBRA 1 – 5

POSSIBILITY

Having come to a very mature sense of oneself one can begin the work in earnest. We need to idealise, to find the perfect image of what we aspire to become, and be very clear and honest about where and who we are. We begin to notice two things, that we have become more influential and that we tend to seek out those at our level because others cannot satisfy our need for spiritual fellowship and inspiration. When the time is right the teacher arrives and the transmission of higher aspects of knowledge can occur, yet we are steady enough in our centre of self not to need to project our longings upon the teacher in person since we know it is the Teaching itself that we yearn for.

There is an intrinsic equivalence between beingness and meaning; we are the meaning of our lives, and there is nothing else to it. Our life purpose is to be the best possible version of our unique selves. There are two major forces that act upon us to unsettle the status quo – those of degeneration and regeneration, and we need to resist the former, and flow with the latter, in order to remain and explain exactly who we really are.

This is the only game in town, and it is the ultimate adventure – so we are stimulated, challenged, attacked and supported through it all. It is indeed best to view it as a game – and yet there is nothing else more serious, or in fact less serious – life is just best played as a game. Certain laws apply, and yet there is no rule book since the directives are self-selected. Typical beliefs that people hold are that we develop skills and knowledge so as to increase our rewards, that justice eventually prevails, that love conquers all…and so on. It takes a true idealist to maintain faith in these life principles throughout all of our difficulties, and the ideals that we embrace are representations of our intuitive sense of possibility. An inner feeling tells us what we might achieve, and then it is the accomplishment of this felt potential that imbues our lives with significance.

LIBRA 1

A BUTTERFLY MADE PERFECT BY A DART THROUGH IT

(ARTICULATION)

RUDHYAR: A BUTTERFLY DISPLAYS THE BEAUTY OF ITS WINGS, ITS BODY IMPALED BY A FINE DART

SACREDNESS OF RELATIONSHIP

Tuning into to rhythms of natural energy instead of being enslaved by passion and need

Through sexual desire and emotional need we get drawn into relationship to learn how to internalise polarity. Rebellious immaturity is only be dealt with when we master polarity inwardly rather than by seeking another person to make up for our lack of wisdom and emotional poise. Facing relationship in sacredness is the key.

It is both futile and poignant to articulate impermanence with gestures of beauty

Love, harmony and beauty are related. Love's highest attribute is harmony, which in turn is perfected in form as beauty. It is the interactivity between two opposite energies that sponsors these qualities on cosmic and personal levels.

Two equal forces co-exist in all things. Self-expression is the outward direction of separation that seeks exultation through exploring uniqueness; surrender is the inwardness of being that yearns to remember love, the sublime condition of merging with others.

These forces are more powerful than any other; they can be called experience and knowledge, and their mutuality of attraction is raw and passionate: desire itself. Great poise is needed to hold them in balance; otherwise what occurs tends towards either chaos or inertia.

In love, This and That are the perfect couple united in harmony, the one adapted to the other and both lost in each other. In separation, their profound yearning to reunite is shown by a constant urge to capture beauty, to pin the wings of a butterfly – preferably but impossibly in flight.

Such futility is so poignant! Yet what else to do? Why not articulate life's terrible impermanence with such a gesture of ephemeral beauty? Children build sandcastles, Tibetan monks make sculptures of butter. Beauty is fickle by nature.

In the very moment of creation, all forms are doomed to die, and what eventually remains is memory's impression. Then let us make our hearts as tender as a new-born, so they will be impressed deep and forever with the grace of beauty that only a loving heart can perceive.

Though we may pin butterflies to stem the tide of time, relentlessly the processes of ageing claw away at the surface grace of form. Yet this unwelcome imperative is so often what forces us to turn within and recognise the wiser beauty of love eternal.

LIBRA 2

LIGHT OF THE 6TH RACE TRANSMUTED TO THE 7TH

(THRESHOLD)

RUDHYAR: TRANSMUTATION OF FRUITS OF PAST EXPERIENCES INTO SEED-REALISATIONS OF CREATIVE SPIRIT

CENTRED SENSE OF SELF AS A CREATIVE POWER

The power to create new realities must be rooted firmly in our awareness of who we are

In Jones's text the image has made reference to esoteric understandings and numerology that in essence suggest that having mastered 6 aspects of life, we reach up to the 7th, which is of a higher order. When a seeker moves on to these more subtle realms of consciousness it is necessary to have a firm grasp on who we are and what we are doing; there are real dangers. To guard against them we need to be totally convinced about exactly where we centre ourselves and what precise purposes we have.

Our race is transforming out of its current imperfections towards an enlightened future

According to certain esotericists, humanity is currently on the threshold between two significantly different levels of manifestation. Moving from the 6th to the 7th entails a transformational process, beginning first with the acknowledgment of our current imperfections and limitations.

We need carefully to study history, as if it were a mirror, to observe how our characteristics have been reflected by our circumstances. We live in a modern global society, an extremely complex configuration of thought and behaviour, and we need to understand who we are and what we are doing. This is our main task as 6th race beings.

What emerges into our awareness, during the process of reflection, is the truth of what we are valuing. There is evidence that we are showing too little appreciation for the gifts that have been bestowed. This shows in our poor physical health and various global abuses that have created climate change and the extinction of various species.

To cross the threshold is not a matter of journeying through physical distance, or even passing through time; we need to transmute light. Most individuals on Earth do not know how to achieve this, so those of us who do have a great task – to carry the burden for the rest.

We need to project a clear, strong, optimistic, enlightened vision for the future of our race.

We are challenged in this, on all sides. The powers against us would have us lose heart, feel weak, unguided, and prone to failure. We must not allow ourselves to indulge degenerate attitudes of complacency. We could lose all sense of reality, and become completely impractical. Many will regress into otherworldliness rather than face the hard facts of physical reality.

There needs to be found a legitimate balance between real and ideal – and we must learn to both encourage, and trust, every individual to reach their own unique potential. This is both the means, and the result, of the transition.

LIBRA 3

THE DAWN OF A NEW DAY, EVERYTHING CHANGED

(INNOVATION)

RUDHYAR: THE DAWN OF A NEW DAY REVEALS EVERYTHING CHANGED

REFORMULATION OF ETERNAL ENERGY

Every breath is another beginning to yet another unique expression of life

A person who has gained awareness of the ideal and knows fully and clearly where is their powerful, unassailable centre is inevitably the major creative force in their own lives. Just by being who they are they initiate significant creative changes in their world. It is quite simply a journey from where we are to where we are going without constraints about which route to take or how long we have to make it. We make it all up as we go along.

Our choices define us, and options to re-invent ourselves occur each day

We are all strongly motivated by an irresistible urge within us to find ultimate self-dependence – to be exactly who we are regardless of external forces. In consequence, we need to blaze a path through life that enables each personal characteristic of selfhood to emerge and shine out.

The dawn comes, and everything has changed again. Similarly we must re-invent ourselves each morning in a constant repetition of the need for innovation.

It is good, therefore, that our appetite for experiment is insatiable. Innovation requires trial and error for its own sake, and we love it.

Through this, and this alone, we are able to continue unending further self-discovery in an adventurous range of human experience.

Despite the kaleidoscopic variation of character traits, and the thoroughness with which we attempt to present ourselves, we come to discover a personal consistency in the recurrent theme of how we are, which gives a clear statement of who we are.

Even in the most trivial of matters, there is real challenge for us to work out our best response – the choices we need to make define us; they are frequent and often unexpected.

The range of possibilities is without limit – even in our everyday affairs we have an infinite flexibility of options to be whatever we want to be.

LIBRA 4

A GROUP AROUND THE CAMPFIRE

(AMIABILITY)

RUDHYAR: AROUND A CAMPFIRE A GROUP OF YOUNG PEOPLE SIT IN SPIRITUAL COMMUNION

INSPIRATION OF GROUP CONSCIOUSNESS

Sometimes inspiration requires a group in spiritual rapport

It is not enough to find personal realisation if we want to be an optimal force for the good. We need to spend time in the presence of others who are also on the path and share our inspiration together. Something larger occurs when we can stimulate the possibility of group consciousness. Jesus's words 'When two or more are gathered in my name, I am there' indicates that sharing is required in order to embody Christ Consciousness.

Community survival requires collaboration so skill in building morale is a sustaining force

A group around the campfire is the first, and uncritical, implementation of the community experience – when there is little or nothing else to do but enjoy the warmth of flame and fellowship.

It is a picture of amiability, and accordingly the special mystery of this degree is an exceptional skill in building everyday morale. This is no small thing; it is the sustaining force for creating an effective social structure to further greater objectives in life – things that require harmonious, collaborative effort to accomplish.

There is a totally unconditioned capacity of each of us to associate with our own kind. We take it for granted because it is so commonplace, yet without it life would be so much harsher and much more dangerous. However, some people are more capable of enabling this interaction. A person who can is an important, though often unrecognised, aspect of community leadership.

No exaction or inhibition restricts this campfire behaviour – everyone is welcome, everyone has an equal voice. This type of voluntary and undemanding association differs from hierarchy, or family units, and has a completely different outcome – one which is an essential component of healthy tribal life.

Implicit within this idea is the fact that any intended reality, broader than a simple self-concern, must also have its origin in common functions. Talking around the campfire is the seed of every vision, and this certainly includes major community activities of great consequence.

Because of this quality of relating, any path or interest that we may personally adopt becomes an appropriate expression of identity rather than a divergence of interest between our fellows and us. The campfire experience binds the community together so that any differences in approach are likelier to be celebrated than prohibited and feared as divisive.

The risk with such an easy-going style of connectedness is that it can sponsor the lazing away of opportunity, and reluctance to pursue one’s ideal out of casual dependence upon others. Yet in today’s busy world, many people are already far too grasping and would benefit enormously from bathing in the amiable atmosphere that a campfire supports.

LIBRA 5

MAN TEACHING TRUE INNER KNOWLEDGE

(AFFINITY)

RUDHYAR: MAN REVEALING INNER KNOWLEDGE UPON WHICH A "NEW WORLD" COULD BE BUILT

TRANSMISSION OF ESSENCE

A teacher's methods allow knowledge to pass by 'osmosis' rather than expression

Controversy has arisen about the spiritual relationship between student and teacher, largely due to abuses of power. However, there is a healthy, helpful process that can occur when the student is encouraged to show reverence not to the teacher but to what the teacher reveres and reveals - the Truth. Knowledge does not need to be reinvented; it can be rediscovered in full provided there is an unbroken transmission through the ages. This requires that student and teacher are present together in a heightened state of conscious beingness.

A real teacher tunes into another's workaday life and recognises unrealised potential

Qualities lie dormant in us until claimed and expressed, and then recognised by another; in some cases it is the recognition that comes first. So, a teacher who can see the potential in another, and who can understand and name it, demonstrates a degree of creative genius – and effectively is co-creating otherwise defunct potentialities. Rather than the skill merely to show knowledge of form and method, it is this ability, possessed only by authentic teachers, to recognise and so awaken another's potential, that demonstrates true inner knowledge.

It takes sensitivity and empathy with another – not only to recognise these hidden potentials – but also to meet them, and so sponsor them. This furnishes the confidence that leads to an expanded repertoire of their personality and behaviours; people will experience more, and participate more successfully in society.

To connect well with others, it's easier if affinity is based on everyday things – because everyone is concerned with them, unlike questions of spirituality and philosophy. We all have communal duties for example, so sharing some of their burden promotes cooperative involvement and better mutual understanding.

To be true to ourselves, we must be true to others, and this means having an optimistic supportive attitude to the ultimate potential that we perceive in them, and to orient ourselves to their highest qualities.

We are by no means small and contained, but vast and involved. Others are aspects of us and the world is a description of self – a true teacher knows and shows this. Yet someone with this ability needs to be careful not to lose focus and simply demonstrate their own skill and insights. The prideful use of them is a subtle form of manipulation that is often used in order to dominate and control.

However, if the inspiration is true and clear, then it cannot be threatened by ego pursuits, since all expressions of pure spirit result in unsullied outcomes. Insights that come from such an understanding can often lead to a genuine path of enthusiasm and passion.

So, as a matter of aspiring to, and demonstrating, a greater integrity of being, it is useful for us to connect with people by helping them to optimise their potential. We can all develop the flair to reveal qualities into consciousness – and reaching out to help others is as much self-realisation as it is self-expression.

LIBRA 6 – 10

DIPLOMACY

The mind of a realised being is a force of Nature and is certain to generate struggle and opposition in exact equal measure to its power. Thus is maintained dynamic cosmic equilibrium. The seeker learns to protect themselves, and how to regroup after a setback, taking time to reflect upon lessons learned and imperfections of approach. We always meet resistance and failures to some degree and the simple question to ask ourselves is this: 'How could I have done that better?'. Then, after a pause to relax and reflect, the eternal dance moves again into its outward expressive aspect.

One who develops true poise withstands the pressures of life and emerges with greater aplomb – but a coarse fool rarely survives life's hard knocks. It's tough here on earth and the inept cannot really thrive – because all of our qualities are each fairly rewarded, yet thoroughly tested. There are consequences for all of our choices and, to be beautiful and powerful negotiating with people who want different outcomes to us, it behoves us to come up with an elegant, effective and diplomatic strategy.

It may be clear to us that freedom arises when we relax our power and enjoy beauty. Yet anything as vulnerable as beauty needs protection – so the power to defend is an aspect of grace. We think of course of the rose and its thorn – each is loyal to the other; they have mutuality of purpose and relevance, and they are really aspects of one another. Similarly, yet more subtly, a diplomat wears soft gloves to cover an iron fist.

LIBRA 6

IDEALS OF A MAN ABUNDANTLY CRYSTALLISED

(PERSONIFICATION)

RUDHYAR: A MAN WATCHES HIS IDEALS TAKING A CONCRETE FORM BEFORE HIS INNER VISION

VISUALISATION

We tend to get whatever we imagine; so let us not imagine what we don't want to attract

To the normal person life is to be observed and accommodated or suffered; yet have a clear sense that it is we ourselves who create the outer circumstances of life, even to the last detail. It is Mind that creates. A strong, subtle and clear mind can both interpret the signals of the soul and resist the distractions of the body, holding focus upon the visualisation of that course which faith and optimism suggest.

Our values are simply escapist constructs – mind games – unless we live them out

Here we affirm that the very root of beingness arises out of meaning. In other words, we each come into being for no greater purpose than to personify the meaning of our lives. Personification of our ideals means crystallisation of our highest aspirations into our behaviour and situations.

When face to face with opportunity, the human spirit's sole dynamic is to bring form to its ideals – anything less than this is self-betrayal.

Otherwise our ideals are nothing – playthings of the mind – since in and of themselves, these values are simply escapist constructs without significant worth.

The embodiment of ideals into a set of behaviours, decisions and working principles is a great challenge that tests us fully. We are examined as to whether we are sufficiently sincere and adequately vigorous in support of our highest aspirations.

So, can we find ways to integrate whatever we yearn to attain into our everyday situations? We find that for this to occur a strong, active, liberal imagination is the key. Abundance is the reward.

Equally, the very lack of a powerful, vibrant imagination leads to self-defeat. It is not acceptable to live out someone else's dreams and ambitions – yet that is what occurs if we fail to envision our own lives our own way.

A measure of a person's spiritual stage of evolution is found in how fully their deepest awareness can be brought into material expression. Manifesting a great richness of material life is evidence of profound spiritual attainment, although it is not the things themselves but the abundant richness that we are contemplating – which arises independently of trappings of wealth.

LIBRA 7

WOMAN FEEDING CHICKENS, PROTECTING THEM FROM HAWKS

(SHREWDNESS)

RUDHYAR: A WOMAN FEEDING CHICKENS AND PROTECTING THEM FROM THE HAWKS

GUARDING AGAINST ATTACK

Every light initiative is met by some form of shadow

A mind clear enough to re-create is a passionate force in the world and must necessarily generate an equal and opposite force of resistance, which will attempt to thwart its purposes by any means possible. Hence the likes of Jesus, Gandhi and Luther King are strongly resisted - yet also Hitler, Stalin and Pol Pot. In fact, as we notice that we come up against strong antipathy we may the know we have developed a strong mind. We must guard against these opposition forces, which very often take the form of collective disgruntlement and confused non-cooperation rather than specific honourable challenge, yet certainly amount to an attack.

It is intelligent to protect ourselves from the dangers than inevitably surround us

We need to protect ourselves from the intrusive forces of that which is undesirable, including certain aspects of Nature. Hawks eat chickens unless we stop them. In this metaphor, we are the chickens and strangers and unfriendly people are the potential hawks.

Life is very complex, and there are serious negative consequences if we lack the ability to administer our own interests with due diligence and aptitude.

What is of value must be nurtured, protected from harm, and fully supported on all levels of need.

Yet always a conscious balance must be struck between conserving natural order and promoting the development of what we aspire towards.

Inevitably a cooperative collaboration – as between man and Nature – produces the best outcome.

Expressing the spiritual quality of shrewdness shows that we have a keen understanding of how best diplomatically to reconcile the various forces operating around us, and optimising our strategies in order to survive and prosper. Certain aspects need feeding, others must be denied.

These challenges stimulate an individual soul – inspiration brings out creative ways to deal with whatever comes up, and then becomes a resource that sponsors improvements in our general appreciation of the richness of life.

LIBRA 8

A BLAZING FIREPLACE IN A DESERTED HOME

(GUARDIANSHIP)

RUDHYAR: A BLAZING FIREPLACE IN A DESERTED HOME

GUARANTEE

However low we fall, we may be reassured that there is always someone to care for us

It is reassuring to know that, however often we may stumble and fall, we can never extinguish the light and fire of Spirit within; as Pope said 'hope springs eternal'. Hope is faith's refusal of faith to die. We can always find a place of spiritual comfort. Indeed, if we do touch bottom and pull ourselves up again, we are noticeably stronger and wiser after that experience, often more compassionate and forgiving too.

We lose whatever we do not secure against loss

Why does a fire blaze when there is no one at home? It testifies that someone was there recently and suggests someone will be again soon, and has the twin function of guarding against potential intruders, like leaving on a light when we go out, and also establishing homeliness.

We have each created a world familiar to us – on a very deep level it is our home. It includes not only where we eat and sleep but work and social activities too. We have invested our life in this world; nothing material is more precious. Through it we are rooted into life, anchored safely to a place that sustains and invigorates us.

The blazing fire can only blaze when many factors are attended to; each can be seen as a metaphor for different aspects of the dynamics of life. We need a fireplace, tinder, kindling and logs, probably a woodshed and axe, a lighter or match and also importantly, the motivation to create the blaze. This motivation is the passion we feel to create our unique world and to demonstrate a powerful loyalty to each of the individuals, activities and scenarios that populate it.

This loyalty is a real force that makes things have the tendency to continue steadily in their accustomed function. So even if, for a while, we desert any aspect of our life-world-home, it is still there for us to pick up again when we return – as long as we have a passion for it.

It is to be remembered that we can achieve little or nothing by ourselves, and we need to enlist the helpful support of others to co-create the particulars of our world. This is greatly facilitated when our vision of what is to occur is raised – by our burning desire – to be a dominant force.

This level of clear-focused, passionate self-projection will always create a stir – and we find we have to grow in responsibility to meet the word's echo of our thrusting attitude. The measure, of how far is our reach, is the level of responsibility we are willing to shoulder and capable of handling.

On the other hand, if we do not fully participate in our own affairs, we find that they are no longer our affairs. Involvement is an intense process of careful, considerate participation, and we lose whatever, by our continued ardent participation, we do not properly secure against loss. Guardianship is mostly seen as attendance to disciplines and routines, for example keeping one's woodshed stocked, yet occasionally we must defend and protect what we love by the demonstration of passion. This applies to close relationship too.

LIBRA 9

THREE OLD MASTERS HANGING IN AN ART GALLERY

(ACCORD)

RUDHYAR: THREE "OLD MASTERS" HANGING ON THE WALL OF A SPECIAL ROOM IN AN ART GALLERY

CHAIN OF TRANSMISSION

Knowledge is passed down throughout history, keeping alive an evolving tradition

The spiritual path is well trod and our journey to realisation is not more than our own take on a very definite formula. This formula is as old as time and its mysteries are passed down the ages by masters. The essential secret is hidden within the number 3 and, through meditation, observation and participation, we can discover that secret. This gives us the possibility - and duty - to re-seed what was seeded before, so to take on an aspect of the role of creator.

Art teaches and expresses finesse; old art preserves and glorifies it

Paintings often gain in value as the years roll by, simply because they are aspects of our heritage, rather than because they become intrinsically more beautiful. Heritage has tremendous value – it provides the foundation for each aspect of individual lives.

The past and present are in partnership. It is inconceivable ever to separate them, and we will always interpret the present – our very lives – in contrast to, and yet in terms of, what gave birth to it.

Hence what we currently desire must in some way emerge from the source material of what has been, and is the fundament of what will become. If we establish an accord with this source material – for example by appreciating old masters – then we build our future on proven values.

For example, we can radically and permanently change the feeling-quality of our lives, by being together with people in order to appreciate whatever it is we find of real value. This action not only bonds us to our values, it can even mystically rewrite the past the better to support our future aims.

Self-expression, as one of its characteristic qualities, has the ability to draw others into alignment with our desire, so to strengthen the power of our visionary projection, by adding the force of group intention to our own single-pointed will.

We need to moderate our acknowledgement of past glories however. To get lost in idle worship of traditions is to forego current opportunities, and to render ourselves of lesser consequence than the ones who – apart from their reputation – are dead.

To be fully in accord is to demonstrate how well we can embrace, within our own personal experience, that which has universal worth within collective reality. Any object, like an artwork, that can still command attention centuries after its creation, is addressing a higher order level of life experience. It is more subtle and so takes finesse to be in accord with it – hence the need for art and the culture of beauty.

LIBRA 10

CANOE APPROACHES SAFETY THROUGH DANGEROUS WATERS

(COMPETENCY)

RUDHYAR: HAVING PASSED SAFELY THROUGH NARROW RAPIDS, A CANOE REACHES CALM WATERS

POISE AND CALM REFLECTION

Quiet time enables assimilation, appreciation and a realisation of what has occurred

There is yang and there is yin. Life is struggle and surrender alternately - we push then we relax and accept. We wake at dawn and sleep at dusk, we have exciting projects and relationships, and they all end. During periods of stress and danger it is helpful to know as a certainty that ' this too shall pass' and there will be relief. Wryly we may also observe that periods of calm relief are only nourishing temporarily - until dire boredom sets in. We need relief from that too.

Humanity has a genius for coping and finding ways to succeed

There is a dimensional difference, which indicates an accumulation of wisdom through experience, between trust that is well-founded and blind trust in sheer good luck. The love of risk and adventure can be nothing more than primitive stupidity.

Or it can be a very conscious self-challenge, designed to improve our skills. We can ask ourselves whether such skills are in fact apt and are developing our resources on the road to success, or whether the love of risk comes out of some other, less serious, motivation, such as thrill-seeking.

Humanity's genius is sometimes invested in nothing more telling than pleasure itself – for example for the feeling of self-love that comes out of skilfully overcoming danger. A whole new industry has arisen around this theme, which includes white water rafting, bungee jumping and sky diving.

Yet, however insignificant or indeed trivial it may seem, such a practice serves the race itself by constantly creating fresh new challenges. As with everything, if entropy is to be avoided, the genius we have for coping with unexpected threats and finding ways to succeed also needs to be practised and renewed.

What once were survival skills, and perhaps nowadays are used only for leisure, serve the same function as ever – to develop powers through the commitment to achieve a goal. Without an external aim we tend to let our abilities and finer qualities atrophy, whereas to experience danger will pull more out of us than otherwise we could access.

Even in daily life there are constant demands that call upon us to come up with a useful response when we have no previous history to guide us. We come to depend upon an inventive level of creative resourcefulness that is, in fact, quite remarkable – but which we tend to take for granted.

All experience therefore is validated according to our willingness to accept the associated risks. We recognise that life is, quite simply, a dangerous activity and, like it or not, we need to deal with that.

LIBRA 11 – 15

LIGHT-HEARTEDNESS

In order to bring about dimensional shifts in self-awareness there is a very definite process to undertake. We take instruction, and inevitably give instruction too, yet we learn to extract from what we learn that which we find of importance. We must also find a way to lighten our minds and not get too burdened down by the heaviness of the past. The future is ours to imagine and we cannot expect joy if we are driven; we must have an inner journey too, one where feelings of lightness and freedom are celebrated. Such is the rhythm of being alive, the struggle and surrender of all existence pushing and pulling, then letting go.

It is highly beneficial to relax and enjoy simple pleasures in beautiful places, because this is how we dissolve the darker, heavy clouds of a worried mind. The very act of perception of beauty is therapeutic, a smile heals, and love is a potent tool of joy. We are studying the law of attraction, which is an elementary life mystery – like attracts like; it may not always be self-evident, but it is known by esotericists as a universal law. So we make ourselves light in order to lighten our lives. The refinement of self is a process of mind. If we think only clear and loving thoughts then we tend to pull situations to us that are conducive to happiness. We need to associate only with empathic people, have only good intentions, expect only what supports our vision, and allow only love to inhabit the heart. This lightens our lives. Heavy feelings such as anxiety, fear, resentment and prejudiced judgements are invasions – we must cast them out.

LIBRA 11

A PROFESSOR PEERING OVER HIS GLASSES

(SPECIALISATION)

RUDHYAR: A PROFESSOR PEERING OVER HIS GLASSES AT HIS STUDENTS

TEACHING

Developing the ability to share what we have learned

Most of us like to share what we know with others, even at the simple level of giving directions to a stranger or tips for cooking. It is an aspect of Knowledge itself that it desires to be known and passed from generation to generation, keeping itself alive and evolving. Knowledge is a living thing and all living things have an investment in the future. Those who have dedicated their lives in pursuit of furthering their knowledge find that the real difficulty comes when trying to present it to others, younger students who need to be understood if they are to be instructed properly.

It takes the grace of modesty to express knowledge as wisdom

The professor, with all the idiosyncratic nuances of this line of work, is as much a part of his specialty as the supportive books and lectures, perhaps even more so. At the horizon of knowledge, a specialist mentality is needed as a skill of the conscious mind. This particular facility of consciousness does not arise alone; it requires an intense commitment to the process of self-refinement within a chosen, definite field of endeavour.

To claim the greatest influence over the shaping of ideas, we are required to have developed the greatest insight and most subtle depth of understanding.

We have to love our subject as part of ourselves – and, no less, we have to believe in ourselves actually as an aspect of the cutting edge of our subject. The knowledge itself is not enough – a thesis always has to be defended, and this requires the strengthening of the ego. Although so often disdained as an inelegant characteristic, a very strong ego is an achievement that often gives rise to further achievement.

Whatever may have been the first reason we chose to specialise, soon we come to learn that such an intense involvement generates influence – so we come to accept the importance of acting out a position of superiority among our associates.

There are a few exceptions, but the general rule is that in any attempt to develop quiet mastery – a quality so admired and sought after – a high ego sponsors attainment. We can see from this that it becomes inevitable that we claim position as we claim understanding – and become the authority on a matter.

By no means is it necessary to become arrogant, compelling the subservience of others and taking joy in their deprecation. We may, however, need to acknowledge that our service to give form to wisdom will often cost us the freedom to experience humility – and the grace that modesty attracts.

Yet of course, it is the very surrendering of self that makes this work even possible; all other considerations need to be subordinated to the dramatisation of responsibility towards knowledge itself, in its yearning to be known.

LIBRA 12

MINERS EMERGING FROM A MINE

(ESCAPE)

RUDHYAR: MINERS ARE SURFACING FROM A DEEP COAL MINE

QUESTING FOR KNOWLEDGE

Life is a mystery in order that we learn how to delve into the mysterious

As much as the professor delves deep to win knowledge, a miner digs down into the earth to win coal, each pays a price - the professor's eyesight and the miners' lungs - and yet they each find their delving valid despite the cost. Sincere seekers inevitably invest heavily in pursuit of realisation; others do not.

Freedom is in the ever-curious mind and the wilful spirit that changes what isn't working

The miner is constantly working in dangerous and difficult circumstances to wrest something of worth from the rock. It requires, and so develops, considerable strength of character and indomitable self-confidence to live like this.

Some lives are lived out fully in very mundane ways, and the scope for personal expression lives only in the mind. We are freed by a mind that is ever curious to understand and experience whatever can be found of interest on restricted horizons.

To harvest the fruits of our endeavours, and find greater happiness, is in any case dependent upon attitude of mind. So, ironically, it may well serve us better to be constrained within straitened life circumstances – in order to evolve a mind whose irresistible spark will always want to find the light in a dark place.

It is through doggedness and uncompromising effort that personality is forced to come to terms with life and find a way forward. The resultant grit is its own reward – nothing much will shake the integrity of one who has faced such hardship on a daily basis.

That said, life is not meant to have to be endured all the time and it is a grim failure if we are unable to find an escape. The miners' blackened uniform faces also speak of the dullness and bleak conformism of non-entities who lack the spunk and insight to rise up against the life-denying crush of Blake's 'dark satanic mills'.

It may well be appropriate for a time to face up to the risk of degradation, being constantly hampered and thwarted in our dreams. But really it should not be endured for too long.

When we reach deep into the well of our inner truth, we find that the life force is inexhaustible and indefinitely supportive. If what we are doing isn't working for us, then something needs to change.

LIBRA 13

CHILDREN BLOWING SOAP BUBBLES

(ENCHANTMENT)

RUDHYAR: CHILDREN BLOWING SOAP BUBBLES

PLAYFUL IMAGININGS

We probably learn as much through play as through work

Whereas delving into what was placed in the past, whether wisdom words or coal, contributes to our knowledge, so too does creative imagination. We dream up the future. Children have no problem with fantasy - a state of mind similar to the enjoyment of blowing bubbles. It is much more than play though; play is the training ground of learning.

To be happy, we can learn from children the magic of being

It cheers us to see children having fun. Blowing bubbles has very little impact upon anything physical; its effect however is very profound on the level of mood. Despite the lack of tangible rewards, we all give a significant degree of energy and attention to gain reassurance through the presence of the beautiful and good.

There is enchantment here. We are moved away from hard reality into a fairy-land, and it makes us more kindly disposed towards our fellows. So in fact there are significant material benefits after all – as we feel more friendly, we spend less energy and money to protect ourselves.

Life's constant challenge for us is to remain capable of childlike enthusiasm for the simple and innocent, while rising above childish incapability to manage difficult circumstances.

The business of adult self-definition can be meaningfully divided into two aspects – what we must do, and what we choose to do. There are duties and there are privileges in life, and it is well to remember that our duties are valid only to the extent that eventually they serve our playful, relaxed, childlike inner self. Perhaps we too should blow bubbles sometimes.

This is not to say that a life spent daydreaming is a life well-lived – that leads nowhere that a truly inspired, creative person would want to be. There is little opportunity for growth in the mere rhythms of workaday routines, and human individuality knows it must be up and at the business of selfhood.

What this does say is that a constant simplicity of character enables us to maintain contact with the transcendental magic of being. If happiness is our purpose, it is unlikely to be realised only through ardent single-minded ambition – we have to stop and smell the roses.

There is a lot we can learn from children. The first expression of gentle humanity is to be seen in their simplicity and openness, and we generally enjoy those qualities in ourselves and others in adulthood – provided they are expressed appropriately when we have completed our chores.

LIBRA 14

A NOON SIESTA

(RECUPERATION)

RUDHYAR: IN THE HEAT OF THE NOON HOUR A MAN TAKES A SIESTA

TIME OFF

It is healthier and probably more productive to take ample time for recuperation

To maintain health on emotional/mental levels as well as physical we must relax sometimes. This 'down-time' is not wasteful or unproductive at all; it is equivalent to the in-breath which revitalises and energises. We must assimilate our experiences, we must allow dreams their place, and we must tune in to the softer side of life in order to restore balance.

Limits on freedom must be monitored to sponsor occasional inner reorientation

We are each competent to cope satisfactorily with whatever comes up in our lives. This is basic – the basis of all life. Any inability to demonstrate this is born of fear.

However, in order to cope and sharpen our thoughts, there are skills and strategies to learn. One important example is to make a normal, routine practice of taking time for a period of reflection and inner reorientation. This down-time is as important as energetic engagement with the external realisation of our goals. Of course we need to rest after exertion, that is self-evident, but there is more to this wisdom.

Such a practice leads to a sense of life as being full and rewarding, with little day-to-day things bringing great satisfaction.

In time we come to learn that we need to withdraw generally from unnecessary involvements if we are to experience freedom. Whatever responsibilities we have that limit our sense of freedom must be carefully monitored. We can get caught up by the hustle bustle and fear-based need to achieve. Typically, people go helter-skelter in pursuit of ambitions that serve someone else's version of what brings happiness. It is a pointless expenditure of effort to target the wrong outcome, and yet it is almost certain that we will do that unless we are properly guided. Eventually we all have to access inner guidance in order to replace ambition with vision, and this requires the mind to find repose and allow soul feelings to emerge, rising up to the surface of consciousness. This is necessary if we are to find happiness upon achievement. It's not enough to know what we want; we need also to remember why.

Our lives are surely a representation of the vision we hold of a world in which we profit, as do others, from an ability to project who we are into the community that we choose to inhabit.

It is simply inappropriate to maintain such a force of projection indefinitely. We are best served by including recuperation periods into our lives whenever there are negative feelings of tiredness, boredom, or signs of disinterest in ordinary little things.

A short rest enables us to take an in-breath, take stock, and regroup. In this more inward state, the unconscious elements in the psyche are better able to commune with higher aspects of our soul's purpose.

LIBRA 15

CIRCULAR PATHS

(CONGRUITY)

RUDHYAR: CIRCULAR PATHS

FINDING SERENITY IN THE RHYTHM OF LIFE

Nature gives us the model of how best to live from year to year

The cyclical nature of life is a given - the seasons come and go, day breaks and night falls, and we have no possibility of entirely escaping them. It is not only society that requires a firm rhythm to operate, we do too. At first, we are challenged to fit in and conform to society's cycles, yet later we must surely go against them to resist both boredom and unconscious enslavement, the dancing to another's tune. Yet beyond that is another wisdom - and that is to find a way to align our own path with external rhythms, to resonate with the environment, and social group around us. This in the end is what brings peace beyond belief.

The incorruptible core of our being makes mind and heart congruent

Whatever occurs, we all stay true at centre. It really is an extraordinary fact of life that the inner core of our unique self can withstand all the comings and goings without contamination or corruption.

These events tend to be cyclical – it's as though our life path is more like a wheel than an arrow and we repeatedly re-live the same dramas interminably.

Of course, it can actually take this level of repetition for us to get the thorough deep-seated participation required in order to fulfil the purpose of an experience. We become shaped mostly by those aspects of our lives that form the rhythm of our days, weeks, months and years. These circular paths bring a necessary congruity to our lives, which are thus made smoother, more comprehensible, and more comfortable because we know what to expect.

We are the centre of everything that revolves around us – in other words we are more than an observer of the transient details of what is occurring. We are conscious to the extent that we are aware of being the central driving principle that energises the dynamic flow of what takes place. If we do not realise this, then we are unconscious.

The facility we have to adjust ourselves to the never-ending changes in life is dependent upon our level of consciousness. According to this degree, we are either master or victim of events. Evidence of mastery comes in two forms – the ability to make practical adjustments to situations, and the ability to make inner adjustments to self.

This is because there are times when our plans and wishes are completely at variance with the circumstances that befall us. At these times, if there is nothing to be done, then the master waits. All will be well soon enough.

The twin danger exists – to try to control what cannot be controlled, or to accept what should not be allowed. Working out which is which, in great detail, can really befuddle the mind. Then is the time to trust the heart. If the mind and heart cannot find mutual congruity, then something is significantly wrong – and we need to look more deeply into the incorruptible core of our being.

LIBRA 16 – 20

BALANCE

To defend our vulnerabilities we build walls - as true for the ego protecting the psyche as a fortress protecting our farms and houses. The seeker travels away from such protections, entering dangerous areas of the unconscious risking breakdown, and there are breakdowns. Constant rebuilding and reworking, of personality, of belief, and of circumstances, is par for the course, and this yet will lead us to contemplative peace. To be able to effect change takes more than belligerence or calm wisdom, it requires us to be part of a new initiative that stimulates a group to act together, and to make steady progress building upon what went before rather than creating radical ruptures at the foundation level of reality.

Each of the zodiac signs has its own path to knowledge, none more important than another – and all of them are essential ingredients of the cosmic pie, like jigsaw pieces that only make sense as a whole picture. The path that Libra offers is the basic law of threeness – celebrated in so many spiritual teachings. It is not the balancing but the perfection of balance that we study here. Balancing is of two-ness: now me, now you. Balance is of three-ness – because when dynamic seesaw is momentarily at rest, then all heaven breaks loose. This is the mystical 'Hu'; this is the infinite moment when time collapses into the instant, into eternity. In this state, all is known. And all is known as One.

LIBRA 16

A BOAT LANDING WASHED AWAY

(RESPITE)

RUDHYAR: AFTER A STORM A BOAT LANDING STANDS IN NEED OF RECONSTRUCTION

MAINTENANCE OF A STRONG RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE REALMS

Rrebuilding the foundation of our lives after new realisations about the nature of reality

It is certain that the path to realisation will take us away from the shores of structured reality into the deep waters of the unconscious aspects of self. These are dangerous waters; from time to time we are very likely to be disturbed, and the security of a clearly defined ego can become temporarily unavailable. Our life is capsized; following such a capsizing we need to repair and rebuild our lives. It is all part of the processes of evolution.

Death is freedom – we should allow ourselves to surrender to force majeure occasionally

So much is said to support the rights of the individual, laws are made and codes of behaviour are proclaimed. Yet we need to understand that power can never be given, it can only ever be taken. We ourselves have to claim our selves – and resist challenges to our individuality.

The forces of Nature are both awesome and impersonal – the stormy sea that washes away the petty creations of people doesn't even notice the stone-built quay it has unceremoniously destroyed when the strong winds blew on a full moon at high tide. On the face of it Nature is rather unfriendly towards our species.

Yet below this superficial level, where natural occurrences are indicted as 'acts of God', we have to acknowledge that the only joy we ever feel is because we are challenged by Nature and are thus able to find out that we measure up.

Not only that, surely Nature's best law is entropy? It is appropriate to let die that which is no longer life-affirming; death is freedom. We are cleansed of what is out-dated by this liberating process whereby natural processes of cosmic law wash away what cannot survive.

Otherwise how would we be stimulated to new accomplishment?

It is not healthy to push forward without ceasing – a respite allows for regrouping, assimilation of knowledge, and renewal of plans – in other words we should allow ourselves to surrender to *force majeure* occasionally, instead of indulging feelings of frustration and powerlessness.

Whatever we build will always be a dimension less than the perfection of Nature. The occasional return to a pristine condition is as appropriate as it is inevitable.

LIBRA 17

A RETIRED SEA CAPTAIN

(RELAXATION)

RUDHYAR: A RETIRED SEA CAPTAIN WATCHES SHIPS ENTERING AND LEAVING THE HARBOUR

RETIRING FROM THE STRUGGLE

We can only achieve so much and there is a time to settle into a more peaceful life

Beyond the ups and downs of ego struggle, beneath the turbulence, is a calmness based on faith and knowledge, which is the soul's field of being. We can access this and choose it as a way of life - yet only after going through stormy waters. It is entirely necessary to suffer and struggle if we are to evolve; evidence of personal evolution is found in an untroubled mind and a calmness of atmosphere.

Finally, we learn to relax

This old salt has been around the world more times than he can remember – yet what he does remember he has not forgotten, and will never forget: he is absolutely faithful to the lessons learned through the countless bizarre and testing experiences of his life-journey. This is what makes him a little gritty in his interactions with others and if he participates in anything at all nowadays, then it is precisely on his terms.

He has but two states of being. In the one, he is completely focussed upon the matter at hand, and brings all factors of realisation to bear down upon this immediate situation to resolve it. Otherwise his default condition is relaxation. He's like an on/off switch.

He has repeatedly commanded a ship's company through danger and feels justified now to enjoy his own reality on his terms. And he can.

We are all getting increasingly like him as the potentials of youth make way bit by bit for the wisdom and confidence that is inevitably bestowed upon an experienced master – the Celts would say 'a bull of 7 battles'.

We need to choose between resting on our laurels to contemplate a lifetime of failures, successes and adventures – or embarking upon something new. Either condition is quite relaxed because we have unshakeable poise, yet the more active one is better for our continued life development. While it is important to have aspirations, ambitions, dreams and adventures, perhaps it is a little more important to remember why we have them. Is there a purpose, a goal? What is the goal? And most appropriately, have we reached it? It is all too easy to keep on trying to attain something by force of habit, when in fact we have already arrived.

The unshakeable quality comes essentially from self-honesty. We have seen the dark sides of our nature and found them forgivable; we have also seen the glories, and found them unsustainable – so we make peace with ourselves. All else is graceless, and very tiring.

The last chapter of an adventure, the last chapter of life, is to do with completion. This is to do with integration of all that has been, and release of all that did not come about. Learning to relax is quite a paradoxical idea; yet required. If we are truly to find a measure of happiness, then at the end of the day, we need to align with who we are and find easy surrender to enjoy what there now is.

LIBRA 18

TWO MEN PLACED UNDER ARREST

(CONSEQUENCE)

RUDHYAR: TWO MEN PLACED UNDER ARREST

RESULT OF GOING BEYOND ACCEPTABLE LIMITS

We must come to terms with the fact that society dispenses punishments

Whether individual or society, each must maintain order by applying sanctions against forces of disorder. Facing the consequences of our own action or inaction lies at the heart of personal responsibility and personal power. We do whatever we want if we can - but we get away with nothing. Somewhere, somewhen we pay for it all. The carrot is the calmness, the stick is the price we must pay if we do not conform to necessary constraints.

If we do not reconcile feelings with circumstances there are serious consequences

The boundaries of an individual and of society are in creative conflict, and this is necessary for the wellbeing of both; revolution and protest are normal aspects of both personal and community life. It is society's function to expand its collective reach and control its members; accordingly there are serious consequences if we do not comply – the agencies of authority stop us in our tracks. Against this restriction, it is for an individual to defend and expand their own personal interests.

Personal optimisation actually requires the threat of subjugation, because conflict sponsors the development of excellence. Potentials are brought into effective expression by friction. We often see frontiers of the possible pushed back by various social challenges, for example with sport, school examinations and even warfare.

Often pressure to conform goes beyond justifiable training, even to a level of the forceful denial of legitimate freedom of expression. Being faithful to who we are is of great consequence and it is the responsibility of the individual to challenge the given order of things, to maintain and proclaim essential values and characteristics.

Our challenges are examinations by which we can identify any discrepancy between who we really are and what we actually do. When we are truly and spontaneously authentic, then life gets significantly easier – and usually until we do learn how to walk our talk we are constantly struggling.

The existential, cosmic need for continual rebalancing expresses itself through us as a compulsion to reconcile our inner feelings with outer circumstances. The power of the individual is mostly the power of persuasion, and we have to understand that there are consequences if we claim the right to self-expression through more forceful means. Force is the legitimate tool of the police whose role is to maintain community stability, and we generally acknowledge the power of the state to stop someone who 'crosses the line'.

However, we notice that in this Sabian image there are two men arrested not just one. Whereas a single person's unlawful expression is easily contained, when one is joined by another, society needs to take extra notice in case more join in and revolutionary shifts begin to threaten the status quo.

As a member of the community, we have the duty to participate in the enforcement of its rules to help preserve the status quo. Yet from another perspective, when its standards are found to be obsolete or in denial of reasonable freedom, then we need to persuade our peers to join with us in legitimate protest.

LIBRA 19

A GANG OF ROBBERS IN HIDING

(DIVERGENCE)

RUDHYAR: A GANG OF ROBBERS IN HIDING

THE POWER OF GROUP DISSENT

Laws are not always just; demonstration against unfairness requires group involvement

Though we may feel outrage at injustice strongly enough to take action, this is entirely impotent against the great forces of crystallised structure unless we act with others towards the same goal. The ability to collect together a group that we inspire and direct is an aspect of our journey. Rebelliousness in an individual will be enough to break away from conservative habits yet insufficient to build anew anything substantial.

Occasionally, we must assert our freedom against external threats

The image of robbers in hiding is almost certain to be judged as a negative. *'Robbers are criminals and they are hiding from justice'.* But there is another perspective – they could be part of the forces of revolutionary change that eventually will unseat a corrupt government. All depends upon what is in the consciousness of the gang.

There is a Sufi story. The local gang leader, also a dervish, attended his sheikh one day to ask for a spiritual practice. The thug declared his desire for great command to expand his power-base. Kindly, the sheikh offered him the wazifas *Ya Mutakhabir Ya Qahhar*, to help overcome obstacles. Years later the Mafioso returned with personnel problems within his mob. He was offered *Ya Majid* this time, and began to take on an aristocratic demeanour. His followers fell into line, and he was able to expand his influence. Time passed, the country's wise old sultan died and was succeeded by his feeble, self-indulgent son. Inevitably, one day the realm was under attack, from an enemy tempted by the perceived weakness. By this time the dervish robber had perfected his skills, and was the only person capable of pulling together a military force. He defended his country and deposed the young inadequate sultan. He became the nation's legitimate and admired monarch, and saved his people.

There are occasions when authority's threat against individuality is a real and present danger against the core purpose of our existence. Demands against the person are a constant force enacted by laws and customs, and we have to be alert to every illegitimate or immoral threat if we are to maintain and celebrate freedom.

However, this has to be balanced with the quite reasonable expectation the community has to limit individual behaviour, at least to some extent, in order collectively to create something worthwhile. So a constant kneejerk mistrust of every imposed discipline is not appropriate.

Also, we have to be careful not to indulge too much a disturbing capacity to take any antisocial tendencies to the level of perversion. No gain will come by prostituting ourselves just to make a point.

The challenge is to differentiate between intelligent, imaginative detours from normality, and unsustainable flights of fantasy. Divergence from normal attitudes is a fact of life – yet it needn't lead to unhappiness.

The goal is to locate a path into the future that is unique, sustainable and sacred. This takes great powers of initiative, the expectation of meeting and circumventing challenges, and the ability to shift perspectives in ourselves, and others. This degree is neither easy nor straightforward – the path of freedom never is.

LIBRA 20

A JEWISH RABBI

(HERITAGE)

RUDHYAR: A RABBI PERFORMING HIS DUTIES

SETTLED TRADITIONAL WISDOM

Tradition binds a community into agreement, promoting social and spiritual conformity

What binds together a group will always include an element of tradition and common practice. Religions and their leaders offer a model of what is true and how to behave. The negative aspect of this is the tendency towards sclerosis; rigidity is life denying. Yet on the positive side, such groups that can form around a well-defined commonality of belief and purpose are strong enough to hold strong energies, which one person cannot hold. Transformation can be overwhelming without group support.

Balance in masculine and feminine, tradition and intuition, spirituality and service

Some of us have a position in life – one that both requires and develops impressive self-assurance – to guide our fellows. This is a normal functionality of any community whereby a deeper understanding of our shared heritage is imparted, and faith is generally strengthened.

The person of the Jewish rabbi represents the force of masculinity that has become contoured by age. Each of us has this force and so, as the years go by, our inner being pushes out against social pressure to form a strongly-defined highly individuated character.

Yet the qualities and behaviour of the rabbi are more indicative of the feminine receptivity – as he gently ministrates kindness and care to all who come to him, distressed and needy.

It takes tremendous dedication to fulfil the task of guide. It is necessary to be an exemplar of both the masculine and the feminine, to hold alive the heritage in the modern era, and to serve.

A single person can become a special channel for the whole community's highest aspirations. It is implicit that the guide does what we would all do if only we could – in terms of service and spiritual remembrance.

There is, with this work, a real and constant danger at a very profound and subtle level. It is little understood that the temptations of ego grow in direct proportion to our level of influence – even as spiritual guides. We are tested to avoid the seduction of self-superiority, and very few pass the test.

What makes it worth the risk is the extraordinary insight that comes to those who are able to stand on the shoulders of the giants who have gone before. These guides are guided, both by tradition and intuition, to a special level of awareness, and ability to serve others.

LIBRA 21 – 25

CHARM

In our willingness to reconstruct our lives we learn how to immerse ourselves fully into the sea of unconsciousness and bring wisdom back to life - the willingness to serve, the ability to foretell and the confidence to proclaim. We shift up a gear and our eyes are opened; we notice how the act of perception is creative. How we look is more important than what we look for or what we look at.

When applied to personality, the quality of charm shows as tact and consideration. The relationship between two people always involves push and pull, give and take – in fact that is what relationship is. We have both to claim and surrender for there to be any involvement. To be considerate, we try to understand what the other person wants, and needs, and take this into account as we pursue our own goals and entertainments.

It is a real skill to see the better qualities in someone, and speak to these. We can recognise a potential in another and bring it into expressed reality by talking it up. People often need a potential to be recognised by someone else before they can affirm their own sense of its possibility. The charming courtesy of tact – always looking to find the best in a person – therefore can actually be magically creative, bringing dormant potential to life. It is an example of 'glamour', in the sense of a magician's methodology, whereby a certain mood or atmosphere is intentionally created in order to sponsor a specific positive outcome.

LIBRA 21

A CROWD ON THE BEACH

(EXHILARATION)

RUDHYAR: A SUNDAY CROWD ENJOYING THE BEACH

SINKING INTO THE MYSTERY

Though we struggle for self-importance, it's lovely to just let go into the Infinite Mystery

The busyness of the world and much of the intended outcomes of Society's rules and practices take us far away from our origins. Way back before time we have ancestral influences from sea creatures, when living beings had little or no sense of individuality but tuned into their species and the general Mother principle. It is important for us occasionally to refresh the deepest memories of this primordial aspect of self - then we are nothing more than a mere grain of sand in the general population, whose obscure purpose is to bring form to something mysterious from which we come.

Being friendly and open, enjoying the simple life, is not stressful

Sometimes people tend to overthink. Certainly analysis has its place, but really we have a lot to gain just by noticing where we are and what we're doing. The raw elements of experience – I am hot, I am wet, I am hungry, I am on a beach, there is sand in my hair – are good places to start when we want to become more self-aware.

It's much the same with social questions – instead of trying to understand what this person or that person stands for or believes, we can simply be friendly, and express ourselves freely.

Then everyone on the beach is a friend. This expectation of the simple enjoyment of company can be very exhilarating and actually life-enhancing.

Beyond a reasonable degree of self-restraint and sensitivity to another's need for space, we find that a free-and-easy openness of expression is helpful in keeping our levels of emotional stress to a minimum.

It's not so helpful to expect others to provide entertainment and company for us – we are better bringing something of ourselves to the table as a way both to show cooperation and to energise involvement.

That said, there are some beach-goers who are very loud and coarse. That kind of behaviour doesn't serve the community well.

Still, with the right attitude of mind we tend not to be too bothered by these types – we can join them in their fun, ask them to quiet down, or we can simply just move on. Why make it an issue? Also it is worth asking ourselves sometimes if we are the coarse ones!

LIBRA 22

A CHILD GIVING BIRDS A DRINK AT A FOUNTAIN

(SOLICITUDE)

RUDHYAR: A CHILD GIVING BIRDS A DRINK AT A FOUNTAIN

GARDENING

Though we cannot improve on Nature, we can channel its bounty to serve

As much as we insignificant, momentary grains of sand in the eternal, infinite expression of Isness, we are also powerful and important creators, with the possibility to use Nature's gifts for whatever purposes we choose. So we choose to employ our gifts, skills and imagination to help others, and to offer caring attention. This demonstrates the depth and sensitivity of our understanding of life's core, secret meaning - to serve another as if it were ourselves.

Who we are is what we get

The child is giving water to birds because she enjoys serving their needs not for anything she expects to receive in return. She is by nature solicitous so she seeks out whom to serve. This demonstrates the naive, uncompromising faith in friendly relationships that characterise the world. It is this sacred quality of solicitude that brings about a deep feeling of wellbeing, which we enjoy and desire.

It may seem quite self-evident that self-fulfillment is our constant life-goal, yet somewhat counter-intuitive that service is a fast-track path to accomplish this goal – and of course here we are not discussing service as the superficial efforts expended either for transient popularity or ready exchange.

We can experience a sense of our spiritual immortality – rooted in innocence, indestructible through time, and in complete harmony with the needs of others – if we express the same level of creative concern for others as this child, who is an image of naive optimism.

This attitude inevitably leads to the enlightened discovery that in everyday life there are always fruits that arise out of the simple fact of selfhood. Just being who we are leads to fulfillment. If we do not find these fruits fulfilling it is for one reason only – that we have strayed from truly authentic self-expression.

A developed person is not dependent upon outer circumstances for their inner feelings; satisfaction arises first within, and then creates life events that please us – not the reverse. This understanding is the principle marker of our true spirituality and achieved level of personal evolution; it is the very enactment of our faith that we understand this: who we are is what we get.

With this level of attainment it is easy for us to cast our glance wherever we choose, and there find opportunities for joy. The truth of joy is that it is enhanced by sharing it, so we seek out occasions to serve in order to share, and therefore enhance, our joy.

Equally, the extent of our responsibilities is created out of our own inner nature and sense of what needs to occur; thus our duties are self-indicated not imposed. Providing a bird-bath in our garden is then seen neither as duty nor hobby but paradoxically both, since we have to do what we want to do – yet we actually want to do what, in all conscience, we feel we have to do.

LIBRA 23

A ROOSTER

(FERVOUR)

RUDHYAR: CHANTICLEER'S VOICE HERALDS SUNRISE

HERALDING THE COMING LIGHT

The first to feel the dawning of a new consciousness have the duty to shout about it

Each moment is entirely new and unique, and carries the promise of surprise, originality and wonder. The cock crows at dawn and not only claims to be first to announce what is now coming but also feels his crowing actually causes the Sun to rise! Surely our response to each new moment can be spiced a little with cockiness?

We succeed by making the world aware of the qualities that define us

The rooster image is often associated with conceit and bombast; these attitudes do not lead us anywhere helpful. In all likelihood they would generate resistance that could block our legitimate progress.

However, we do need to make known to the world the qualities, skills and aspirations that define us. This will lead to practical rewards as we learn to make effective use of our own unique and distinctive merits.

The struggle to achieve an appropriate place in life is deeply meaningful, and bestows enduring significance at the level of soul. At times the ego needs to risk the loss of grace as it crows a little to announce the soul's purpose.

When taken to an immoderate degree, such behaviour may well become inelegant, and threaten our social stability – yet, when we are motivated by the fervour of self-disclosure, such concerns are of secondary importance.

In fact, very often fearless self-disclosure is enough to win the minds and hearts of others whom we seek to influence. It certainly secures attention, and possibly allegiance too, and these are both concomitants to success.

It is a very special person who is able to live by, and proclaim, their own unique set of ideas and values untarnished by social niceties and the demoralising imposition of community disapproval. We have our own insights and discernments – and the soul establishes its basic integrity in life only when these are assumed to be enough for each and every one of the situations we encounter.

With such integrity, it is very likely that our social role, and how we conduct our affairs, will go generally unchallenged. So we are able to create a smooth, satisfying and utterly authentic life path.

LIBRA 24

THIRD WING ON LEFT SIDE OF BUTTERFLY

(DISTINCTIVENESS)

RUDHYAR: A BUTTERFLY WITH A THIRD WING ON ITS LEFT SIDE

EXCEPTIONAL FACILITY OF CONSCIOUSNESS

Spiritual awakening can be achieved by serious seekers, the seeds of an evolutionary step

Evolutionary development has two characteristic qualities. The normal process of development is 'a little bit at a time' with periods of clarity and periods of confusion creating a general unfolding of further understanding. Yet rarely - perhaps once or twice in a decade - we may go through sudden dimensional shifts when a veil is torn from our eyes and we move up the spiritual mountain path in leaps and bounds. Life is never the same after one, and we never lose the expanded awareness. The more profound versions of this are called by Sufis 'maqam shifts'.

Our unique qualities distinguish us from the norm and add to the richness of society

This bizarre image speaks to the importance in life for us to hold firm to the distinctiveness of who and what we are unconditionally – even if that makes us extraordinarily unusual.

By cherishing our own particularities, we sharpen our acuity of perception towards our social group, and we then see more clearly. We see not only the opportunities that come from differentiation, but also the underlying affinities beneath the differences.

These quirks of character are the treasures of human life – the fruits of previous choices and realisations – that have practical value.

They indicate, incontrovertibly, the exact contours of our specific idealised standpoint. Not only that, the process by which we reach such a specific life-statement brings out an ability to assess situations and respond with originality.

What use are we to humanity if we cannot add something original and idealistic? The potentiality of the world, and of our species, will only ever be acted out through individuals.

Many people invest themselves within trite attitudes, and become obsessed with impoverished or ridiculous ideas and worthless occupations. They blame the harshness of life self-pityingly, instead of forging ahead meaningfully.

We must trust that our destiny will reveal itself to us if only we would let it. Surely we can be intuitively aware that our fate is not to suffer a pointless, uninspiring path of failure and regret?

LIBRA 25

INFORMATION IN THE SYMBOL OF AN AUTUMN LEAF

(TACT)

RUDHYAR: AN AUTUMN LEAF BRINGS A PILGRIM THE REVELATION OF THE MYSTERY OF LIFE AND DEATH

SEEING THROUGH THE ILLUSION

With a certain attitude of perception we can find the depth of spiritual truth in all things

With a new dimension of perception what we saw before is seen differently. No longer confusing and mysterious, all things are revealed, all patterns are made known on a very much more subtle level of consciousness. Leaves were always beautiful in Autumn, but now we see that that beauty is even more poignant because we have no sentimental repugnance towards death, even of our love ones', even our own. All we see is part of all that is and must be exactly that way in this moment so to reflect All That Is in this moment.

Everyone has their meaningful place in life

A fallen leaf seen tactfully is not a waste product of the tree's summer need for the Sun's energy; it has become food for the earth and a source of joy and inspiration for those touched by natural beauty. Somehow this unswerving fidelity, to honour everything and everyone for their ultimate goals and meanings, creates a sense of being able to adapt spontaneously to all that comes along, trusting in our own sense of how best to serve the needs of this moment simply by being who we are without censorship or external reference.

That special ability we have, to know how to respond imaginatively to challenges, can be directed towards the greater questions so that we come to see how, exactly how, all things are interconnected by the process of mutual exchange – that all of the various aspects of life have their own contribution, and mutuality is the universal currency of survival and abundance.

On the human level, it is tact that awakens this comprehension, since through it we look for ways to show appreciation of the value that another person brings. It is much more than a simple courtesy or charming elegance, because it raises both giver and receiver. Our sensitivity develops so that we always keep in mind the intended final purpose of a situation, a person, or thing and, by so doing, offer greater recognition.

Our capacity to think things through, to consult inner experience and intuition, and to find imaginative solutions, is so often wasted on new ways to make the same old mistakes.

Whereas the constant practice of the art of tact will unfailingly generate the inner understanding that all things are inter-dependent; in every case there is symbiosis between the individual and the world.

On a personal level we then develop the efficient means to serve ourselves and others simultaneously and accordingly grow in our influence to shape events. To serve the world, to serve a neighbour and to serve ourselves are therefore equivalent and mutual activities.

Humanity's intelligence is so often misspent by engaging in unbridled fascination with trivia. We need to focus more on the way that sometimes someone contributes in small ways, and accept that they are doing what they do in their own way and usually better than we ever could – and, even if we don't know how or why, accept that their contribution is an essential part of the whole picture.

LIBRA 26 – 30

HARMONY

The path of knowledge is a study of how to be and what to do. We may be taught that Love is the absolute idea, and yet Will is ever-present as both a distraction and as an examination. Can we? Will we? We must access transcendental states to escape the bind of duality; life is not defined by right and wrong, good and bad and we need to see that clearly. As we look we notice that we are part of something much bigger and more wondrous and we choose to participate fully in its history and future. This is what enables us to realise the difference between empty cleverness and compassionate wisdom.

Sufis pray to remember this state of perfection, 'Hu', which exists within us all, and is beyond pain and suffering. It is approached by recalling a feeling, known as 'Ishq', which is taught to be Divine Nostalgia – the heart-centred aching felt by one who has known and yearns again for Absolute Love. It is taught that we have all known that Love – that we were born from it and inevitably will return to it. There is a close relationship between love, beauty and harmony. Since love is ambiguously defined, often capricious, and extremely idealised, it is conceivably more reasonable to venerate beauty, and aspire towards harmony, rather than demand or expect something as transcendental as love. A pilgrimage of beauty is almost certain to succeed, and will lead inevitably to connectedness and harmony – and then with grace, love may descend upon us.

If humanity is to claim its spiritual destiny and emerge from a sleeping state into awakened consciousness, we will eventually need to affirm a life of innocence and beauty, fellowship and awareness. Beauty is but a passing mood – its power to inspire awe enhanced by its transiency. Through beauty, the heart reaches out to know love – and through transience, it knows pain. We attach ourselves to that which is always shifting – and the attachment itself is responsible for sorrow, and its terrible sister, grief. Perhaps we do this for protection because we ourselves are shifting too? However, ultimately, we must come to know that both the flow, and the instant, is illusion. The ache of the grieving heart can actually be a fast-track path towards joy – if we would only surrender our fear of loss and discover the sacred mystery hidden deep within the broken heart.

LIBRA 26

AN EAGLE AND A LARGE WHITE DOVE TURNING INTO ONE ANOTHER

(ADEPTNESS)

RUDHYAR: AN EAGLE AND A LARGE WHITE DOVE CHANGE INTO EACH OTHER

MASTERY

Love, will and intelligence can operate in unison with higher consciousness

There are occasions when we focus on will and times when we focus on love. These are not necessarily contrary principles, yet they are certainly different, and in fact often opposed so they can act in polarity. Each comes and each goes and the changes in life are characterised by the alternating of their comings and goings, sometimes at such a fast pace that they seem to coalesce or turn into one another indistinguishably.

An adept is above emotionality; immediate pleasures are subordinated to ultimate ideals

There is a point of consciousness above duality, where neither this, nor that, dominates. It is the position of the adept. Above emotionality, from this perspective we can see clearly the options available to us before we descend into committed choice. Then we become able to choose eagle or dove – hunter or peace bringer – and readily change from one to the other.

In every moment, our general state of affairs is the immediate realty of what choice we are making – and we need to take on fully our responsibility for that. What we get is what we choose to get – eagle or dove.

There can be an unhappy vacillation between two sides of our nature – the one represents our ultimate ideals, while the other is more interested in our immediate pleasures.

The extent to which we can cope with this vacillation is the extent of how well we control our fate. Every action we take must serve our own true interests – short or long term – if we are to become real masters.

Adeptness is the image of exceptional personal endowment to meet each and every situation and turn it to our own creative solutions to all difficulties, and grasping of all opportunities in human experience.

Whatever frustrations we feel when we cannot shape matters along idealised lines of development must be addressed internally. This is done by revisiting the mind's place of neutral clear-sightedness and taking stock.

We must notice any imperfections in our state of ultimate indifference. Whatever ideals we are attached to will certainly bind us to the frustrations of the earth, so we have to hone our self-discipline to root out any irrationality or emotionality that clouds our path to supreme indifferent happiness.

LIBRA 27

AN AEROPLANE HOVERING OVERHEAD

(REFLECTION)

RUDHYAR: AN AIRPLANE SAILS, HIGH IN THE CLEAR SKY

SPIRITUAL PERSPECTIVE

A realised person is able to see both sides of the matter in hand

Beyond polarity there is transcendence. This is a state of consciousness wherein we have no attachment to one thing or another, no confusion about the merits of this or that and neither love nor will is supreme - because we can see that the bigger picture requires both dynamism and serenity - both separation and merging.

Overview sponsors good judgement by seeing things in terms of their likely consequences

Some people have a complete inability to attend to immediate realities, and somehow they just bumble along not really engaging with the truth of the situation or matter at hand. Others, having acquired proficiency in self-adjustment, become very adept in dealing effectively with crises.

Clearly, which of these types we are depends a lot upon having a resourceful character – with a broad and deep palette of imagination that enables appropriate creativity.

In this image the aeroplane hints at overview, which is a perspective that sponsors reflection. The idea here is that we can get a fuller and more workable sense of any situation by seeing scenes and scenarios in terms of their likely consequences, and their relationship to other things.

In life, this higher level of real intelligence is won through encounter and contemplation; consequently we need to allow for that in our attitude or approach, and how we adjust to circumstances. So even when we don't want what we get, as a resourceful person we will chalk it all up to experience and find a way to profit – for example by accumulating wisdom.

As we test our new understandings, in the normal trial and error processes of life, we project our imagination onto the field of potential. Imagination is a creative force; it creates the future, and its reach is never-ending. Thus, in one sense, we become immortal beings by being the author of, and so part of, whatever occurs down the line eternally as a result of our projects.

Despite all the evidence to the contrary, the human species has an impressive degree of psychological maturity within its range of behaviour. We can anticipate consequences, we can appreciate other viewpoints, and we can discipline ourselves to defer personal gratification for the greater good.

A very high level of satisfaction is felt when we get even a taste of this advanced state of being. There are certain moments when we can touch within ourselves the place that resonates with the highest – then, perhaps just for an instant, we have the capacity to know the quintessence of human potential.

LIBRA 28

MAN IN THE MIDST OF BRIGHTENING INFLUENCES

(RESPONSIVENESS)

RUDHYAR: A MAN BECOMING AWARE OF SPIRITUAL FORCES SURROUNDING AND ASSISTING HIM

HAVING FAITH THAT WE ARE PART OF SOMETHING BIGGER

By surrendering our need to be special we feel the community's constant support

We are none of us alone, we are part of a greater whole. We can see this in family, tribe, community, nation and species - or even at the levels of cosmic resonance to higher degrees of consciousness. The more profoundly we embrace this the deeper becomes our faith in ourselves and life generally. Without faith life is a fearful process; yet with it all is well.

Life is a pilgrimage from darkness to light guaranteeing enduring rewards to the faithful

Man in the midst of brightening influences is a symbol of our responsiveness to an inner sense of hope.

We should avoid wishful thinking when it is unadorned by accurate reflection on the facts of the matter, and absent of the will to achieve, because it leads to stultification of the self. Yet confidence in the certainty of a good outcome, peace after the storm, is a valid spiritual principle.

To raise this impulse to its highest level at which it is useful, we simply have to accept the positive evidence that, beneath all the sham, the world at large has an underlying deep-seated friendliness. This engenders, even in the cautious soul, a sense that the world itself is a nurturing and encouraging place in which to act out our ideas and fancies. It can be counted on; trust will be rewarded with success.

The pilgrimage, from darkness to light, requires us to press forward with unflagging courage, safe in the knowledge that the journey itself is its own reward – yet also aware that detachment from outcomes is actually what ensures a successful result.

When taken seriously on its own terms, life guarantees enduring rewards. Wishy-washy won't work, and really we wouldn't want it anyway because we get so much more from a life that fittingly rewards courage and clarity. Our intuitively derived principles of justice require that brave, clear-minded individuals are suitably valued.

With this cosmic law operating, we see that our moods and potentialities are fairly and accurately reflected by the particulars and atmosphere of our circumstances. This is a deeply satisfying improvement on the alternative – something-for-nothing – and it is the ground upon which is built spiritual integrity.

Since all are subject to the same ruthlessly applied natural laws, what develops in the responsive soul – who sees all suffering as heartrending yet fair – is the deepest level of compassionate wisdom and a feeling of spiritual fellowship with all beings.

LIBRA 29

HUMANITY SEEKING TO BRIDGE THE SPAN OF KNOWLEDGE

(RATIONALITY)

RUDHYAR: MANKIND'S VAST AND ENDURING EFFORT TO REACH FOR TRANSFERABLE KNOWLEDGE

INVOLVEMENT IN HUMANITY'S EVOLUTION OF WISDOM

We co-create the flowing and flowering of knowledge

One of the most splendid of human characteristics is that we have conscious awareness of and intention to be a living link of the chain that binds past to future, ancestors to descendants. This comes out of our sense of being part of something greater than ourselves, and indeed truly great. This is an aspect of our participation in life and a real guard against the desolation of loneliness that accompanies selfishness.

Meaning comes when we find the pattern that connects the various aspects of our lives

We gain knowledge by bridging the gap between the known and the unknown. Each individual's faith in their own powers of reasoning generally proves itself as they seek to further their range of experience, for example when they connect with a different world or culture.

We all have special gifts, and our lives represent the rationality of our belief in those unique gifts. As we present these talents and understandings to the world, we require some recognition. We want to be valued for our skills and insight.

We need to remember that our desire for achievement, and realisation, is only effectively made manifest through activity that aligns with our essence. This naturally calls for the dramatisation of our fullest potential in every direction within our circle of influence.

The perfecting of wisdom cannot take place out of context – in order to be wisdom, it needs to be applied in practice. There is a clear relationship between cause and result, one which obeys laws of rationality, and to gain knowledge of what our experiences mean, then we have to join the dots, and find the pattern that connects the various aspects of our lives.

This is a symbol of humanity's capacity to make a very practical instrument for measuring our accumulated experience in terms of wisdom – for every inspiring or unusual contribution we might choose to make.

Egotism needs to be kept in check – too much of it belittles or defeats even normal accomplishment. Even though a strong healthy ego is a prerequisite to attainment, there are dangers in going too far with this aspect of the psyche.

The final mystery of knowledge is not so much the answering of all our questions, but the very disappearance of questioning. For this to occur, it means that we have to let go of any intention to persuade ourselves or others, and just know what we know without the need to have it approved or even necessarily heard.

LIBRA 30

THREE MOUNDS OF KNOWLEDGE ON A PHILOSOPHER'S HEAD

(PRESCIENCE)

RUDHYAR: THREE MOUNDS OF KNOWLEDGE ON A PHILOSOPHER'S HEAD

WISDOM OF KNOWLEDGE

We can see wisdom as a deep understanding of both truth and love

Knowledge is not wisdom; it is of course a necessary aspect but without understanding it can be dry or even dangerous. A full and complete wisdom must involve experience and embodiment, a sense of the human implications of a theoretical concept and an acknowledgement of the interconnectedness of all things. The philosopher who has nothing to offer but logic is never likely to reach the truth of any situation or idea.

Seeing the future requires an accurate appraisal of the past

The philosopher metaphor points to our human faculty for analytical thinking, and the three mounds of knowledge can be seen as our skills, allegiances and ideals. These are the aspects of mind that formulate our perceptions, and upon them we build our structures of reality.

What may be, and what must be, are different qualities of the future and, at least to some extent, each is somewhat knowable. We develop an exceptional gift to further our designs when we learn how to extrapolate patterns from the past to gain knowledge of what is probably coming.

This ability, called prescience, is quite normal – and applied routinely by those who hold on to a balanced way of life, where instinct and thought are together used cooperatively. We would be wrong to believe that philosophers have small regard for intuition – however, as disciplined thinkers they confirm their feelings with rational thought.

The challenge we all have is to progress to an optimal expression of being, the perfection of self. In this state, we can read the flow of our lives and we come to see how there is a dynamic integrity – a reliable code that informs all that unfolds.

It is an aspect of a universal code, the cosmic order, which interpenetrates us and everything else, forever. Everything we are, and all that we experience, is a part of this unfolding complex vibration. We gain insight into its secrets only when we study what has gone before with impeccable, unattached clarity of mind.

Understanding this can bring with it a seductive sense of self-assurance, even superiority – so we must be on the lookout for signs of silly intellectual pride. It is rather an ugly condition of so many scientists and philosophers that they remain self-obsessed despite their awakening to the reality that knowledge is infinite and unknowable. Humility seems a more appropriate response, given how little we know of what there is to know. For some reason people generally make the claim that their understanding of this code is as valid as anyone else's – even though they lack the diligence and intellect needed to penetrate this, the biggest mystery of all.

Since everything is only and always an expression of the universal, eternal code, nothing is ever fundamentally wrong. Wars and famine, disease and injustice all have their correct place in the order – yet it takes a truly wise and exceptionally mature person to fathom why it must be so.

SCORPIO 1 – 5

PASSION

Two powerful forces operate within us that somehow bring a dynamic balance to life. One is our desire for new experiences; the other is our sentimental nostalgia for belonging. Each pulls us in opposing directions and we must always in each moment choose which to surrender to. We will feel discontented until we find our group and may meander restlessly in body or in spirit until we feel right. Then we may participate fully in the collective celebration of the community's idiosyncrasies so that we are identified as 'one of us' by the others collectively.

When life force is allowed to flow freely between two polarities, the result is passion. These polar extremes could well be man and woman in sex, but it applies to everything at all times. Passion is worthwhile for its own sake, because this is how energy moves – there is no other way that life can be dynamic; it is the essence of existence. Life is passionate; the birth of life is passionate, made obvious with the Big Bang theory, in childbirth, and in sex. So, if we want to get to the secret of life itself, we must actually allow passion to overwhelm us.

Passion overrides all else, with no regard for analysis or comprehension. It is evidenced in violence, in orgasm, in enthusiasm and in awe – and if we do not know passion, then we cannot know the depths of soul. Disdaining trivia, finding the highest potential in any situation, the person of passion is ever-resourceful – because they've learned the secret of how to align with cosmic, existential excitement. Having mastered control, the possibility of complete surrender becomes feasible; having mastered security, the possibility of complete trust becomes feasible – so natural urges and spiritual ecstasy are in total accord.

SCORPIO 1

A SIGHT-SEEING BUS

(FRIENDLINESS)

RUDHYAR: A CROWDED SIGHTSEEING BUS ON A CITY STREET

CURIOSITY

Curiosity is what makes us expansive and therefore inventive and pioneering

We humans are never content to accept the status quo, we have an inbuilt appetite for expanding our range and depth of experience and a curiosity for new information and feelings. This is the driving force that motivates us to travel and see what achievements other shave to show, perhaps in the form of creative works, technology, or simply lifestyle. It is fundamentally tied in with our urge towards self-realisation.

Spirit is limitless in its ability to find and profit from new perspectives

At every juncture, life present two fundamental choices – one path one is authentic, the other on some level is false. We can be freed from all artificial experiences by exercising care of choice and clarity of identity. Such behaviour ensures we do not lose the self either in wasteful expenditures or lost opportunity.

There may be boundaries within which we operate, yet these do not diminish our range of experience; they simply focus it. Spirit is limitless in its ability to find, exchange, and profit from new perspectives with others.

Friendliness can lead to friendship, empathy and sympathy. Sight-seeing, which often leads to an expansion of perception through culture shock, leads to awakenings. Going sight-seeing together with a friend therefore is a good way to deepen our understandings.

As we are carried along the meandering journey of our lives, opportunities come and go quite quickly – and to seize the moment requires more than just intelligence. Yes, if a balanced judgement is to be achieved, there has to be a significant degree of detachment – yet we also need to sponsor passionate enthusiasm to strike out fast and certain.

The combination of a clear mind, and an open, ardent heart, creates a strong approach towards exploration – and consequential gifts of richness and variation.

Further, this combination enables us to respond sensitively to developments, in order to recover from difficulties and distractions. This is achieved by re-ordering how we see the present moment, in order to gain insights into what future possibilities are available.

Life then becomes a constant source of engaging scenarios to which we can relate thoroughly – both in innocence and in considered strength.

SCORPIO 2

A BROKEN BOTTLE AND SPILLED PERFUME

(PERMEATION)

RUDHYAR: A DELICATE BOTTLE OF PERFUME LIES BROKEN, RELEASING ITS FRAGRANCE

NOSTALGIA

The pull of the past is underlined by poignant emotions of what has passed away

An almost universal tendency is to conjure up sentimental feelings of the past in moments of nostalgia. In order for us to step forward towards new horizons, necessarily we must surrender our attachments to something we have loved. Yet its perfume lingers on – the sweetest memories outlast any bitter tastes – and we might notice the poignancy that we can only fully appreciate what we have had once it's gone.

Each moment we experience is a creative outpouring of self

The image of a broken bottle is similar to a chrysalis, being burst open. To some this might appear as tragedy – yet we need to remember the bigger picture. We have within us something more precious that can only permeate into the world when we crack open our container.

Every person has a mark of divine determination to be significant at all costs. This irrevocability of self-expression is so fixed that the more esoteric spiritual traditions are based on the near-impossible task of ego surrender as the greatest of all challenges.

In any and every experience, the completeness of self flows out, and the ramifications of that will spread further and further into our world.

Each event and interaction is therefore a creative outpouring of selfhood, utterly faithful in its legitimate rendering of who and what we are. This is most clearly demonstrated during crises, and other times of real issue. Then what is shown is our power of influence – how we impact upon others in a more permanent way.

Like a rose, our most beautiful quality is our fragrance – the subtle influence that spreads out universally, no matter what we say or do. When we live with a supreme dedication to this higher, spiritual, aspect of ourselves, then we optimise the beauty and the power of our influence.

It may seem that breaking the container of our lives – for example by surrendering control – will threaten our security. Yet this is a false and fearful interpretation. Nothing as hard and inflexible as a fixed ego will endure; it must crack one day. It's better to face up to that certainty and deal with the consequences, consciously in our own time.

Otherwise, like spilled perfume, we waste our lives in a witless dissipation of every resource and potential, always at risk and never fulfilled.

SCORPIO 3

A HOUSE RAISING

(HELPFULNESS)

RUDHYAR: A HOUSE-RAISING PARTY IN A SMALL VILLAGE ENLISTS THE NEIGHBOURS'

WORKING TOGETHER

The strong binding force within a community that is exemplified by mutual endeavour

It is an aspect of the feminine mysteries that feelings are not without serious consequence; typically, men are less convinced of this fact. But without feeling a sense of belonging, collective accomplishment is not optimised. The very feelings of nostalgia and sentimentality create a bond that sponsors belonging and from that a reliable certainty of cooperation. We cannot cope alone; our very existence and therefore our species survival requires that we feel inclined to help each other.

Our contact with others is profound and shapes our destiny

Conditions must be right for us as individuals to fit into fixed patterns of shared relationship. Such a profound investment of emotional energy, time and attention, needs great care and caution since it will inevitably influence the future of our self-assessment.

This is because we seek to fulfil our inherent divinity within the scope of relationship with our fellows. Individual realisation is entirely dependent upon this, so contact with others is not seen as trivial and of little consequence; it shapes destiny.

A person's gain mostly depends upon the strengthening of effort, and a boosting of such effort so often arises when the spirit of common enterprise promotes joy in the individual.

Also the power of accomplishment is significantly dependent upon enlisting the cooperative support and practical help of others, as best exemplified by the communal practice of house-raising, the normal activity of rural American communities.

People are generally like this; they have an indomitable spirit of cooperation in everyday matters that binds them together into a strong survival unit.

Our sense of wellbeing derives from this. There is sure dependency that family and friends will rally round in an emergency in the normal, and completely trustworthy, spirit of helpfulness.

Within this seemingly mundane pragmatism is hidden a truly spiritual aspect. We subsume personal preferences and agendas to the greater good of the whole so a shared sense of unity arises during such activities.

SCORPIO 4

YOUTH HOLDING UP A CANDLE

(RELIANCE)

RUDHYAR: A YOUTH CARRIES A LIGHTED CANDLE IN A DEVOTIONAL RITUAL

RITUAL

Occasions and defined behaviour can form the rituals that create sacredness

The defining of 'our group' is important. Some strangers would threaten our survival and happiness. Not all strangers are enemies however, and we need to be able to tell which is which. We do this through the development of rituals, which also have the purpose and effect of deepening the bond between members of our group. Rebels within are also clearly identified as they always refuse to participate in certain selected rituals. These can be mundane or sacred, from celebrating certain days of the year with pancakes, chocolate eggs or roast turkey to the observation of prayer and rites to do with birth, marriage and death.

To show our light we have to overcome fear

Living in the physical world presents constant challenges that press us to get to grips with quite compelling realities. The naiveté of youth comes head to head with the harsh truth of having to keep the wolf from the door. Whatever we have as a visionary life strategy will fail if it is impractical.

To learn how it all works means that we have not to be self-obsessed. That is a luxury of childhood, and simply will not do for a viable independent adult life. The ability to relate to others properly is a survival requirement; it demands that we take into account the wants and needs of our friends and neighbours.

Through these dealings we are tested to hold on to our essential goodness and innocence, at all costs affirming lightness of being when cynicism threatens. If we place reliance upon our own ability to do this, then others will come to rely upon us that we will always hold up a candle rather than fear and blame the darkness.

Each single interaction with each and every person in each particular moment is of some consequence. On some mysterious level, a pulse is energised by all aspects of our lives, a vibration which goes out and re-echoes throughout eternity. In this way we come to know something of our immortality. In essence, nothing that was ever alive can ever die, even on the level of thought and feeling.

So we raise our light to the outer world; this is done not only to proclaim but also to remember. We have to overcome fear or reluctance to show our light, since by showing it we keep it alive and even influence others to keep their light shining. A lighted candle touches our sense of sacred, it cheers and inspires people.

The thing to know is how to raise up mundane connections with people. Gold can be found hidden beneath the dross of everyday life – a higher meaning, evidence of eternal, all-pervasive, spirit. It rises to the surface whenever two or more people engage with as much sensitivity to the other's viewpoint as to their own values.

The inner experience of such interactions can awaken our awareness of another reality; it is ever-present yet rarely invoked – the sense of transcendence. This aspect of life, though entirely natural and ever accessible, is nonetheless non-ordinary. The highest within us connects to the highest there is, and for a few moments we get a sense of the interconnectedness of all things throughout eternity.

SCORPIO 5

A MASSIVE ROCKY SHORE

(STABILISATION)

RUDHYAR: A MASSIVE ROCKY SHORE RESISTS THE POUNDING OF THE SEA

THE STABILISING INFLUENCE OF INSTITUTIONS

Double-edged sword of community limits individual freedom yet creates secure stability

Though slow to form, as is land itself, the ways of a community become firmly entrenched and together create a bastion against the storms and tides of evolutionary change. Society is by nature conservative since stability is reassuring and promotes investment and commitment to the collective well-being of the group.

Human emotions are mysterious, unpredictable and sometimes overwhelming

Oceans are powerful images that help us comprehend the mysterious workings of human emotions. They are unpredictable, overwhelming at times, unceasingly changing – and almost uncontainable. Yet the massive rocky shore does contain them, as indeed does the essential reliability of physicality contain our feelings and bring the comfort of certainty.

Lacking such certainty, we would incline towards blind conservatism – clinging to the past, eyes tightly clenched, desperately hoping that at least things will get no worse.

Life requires us to maintain constant vigilance throughout eternity so that we are staunch to our heart-felt values. We reaffirm a path of happiness, trusting that this, our optimistic approach to the uncertainties contained within the future, will steer us true.

We know that the extent to which we may legitimately trust the future is measured by our ability to bring stability to situations. Such stabilisation requires that inwardly we control our feelings and cultivate poise. This requires – and therefore develops – great firmness of personality.

External circumstances can be managed with aplomb when we have learned to centre our sense of reality inwardly. It is we ourselves who must be stabilised – all depends on this.

Then, however dynamic we choose to be in the world, life will respond to us with its characteristic physical reliability. The inner poise of spirit becomes reflected in the dependability of matter.

We come to experience in life whatever we are within. Strangely, and yet unfailingly, we find the possibility of personal exaltation within this. It matters not whether we have joy, as long as we have ourselves – the joy comes from the integrity of the reflection itself. If life is a mirror of what is within us, then we are in control. If things get too difficult, then we must exert prodigious effort to strengthen our will and certainly reclaim the all-important feeling of stability.

SCORPIO 6 – 10

EXPLORATION

The clashings and bangings of passions and self-absorbed delvings give way in the mature person to a sense of calm awareness of the universal presence of Love. Being centred peacefully in Love is not like being 'in love' at all; in fact it is more the opposite. In this state we find joy wherever we look for it, we find solutions to problems and we notice that we are happier when involved with our like-minded, kindred spirited group with whom we experience a state of supportive fellowship. We ease into a more profound authenticity of being.

When what is said and what is true differ, then the foundation of our life is false and insecurity results, so a cautious person will test a situation to examine its truth fully. It is not entirely neurotic to goad another to find out how they react; such provocation may seem to lack good sense in the moment – but as a long term strategy it has some merit. It is only really possible fully to trust someone when you have had a set-to with them, and come out the other side with nothing more serious than hurt feelings and a bruised ego.

Exploration takes us into new areas of experience where we may find the need to mobilise hidden resources, and through this, we can uncover an innate creative genius that finds answers to all challenges. Whether they are to do with dealing elegantly with someone's emotional process, or safely moving heavy objects from here to there, a careful, fail-safe attitude is useful. Life is a real treasure in both outer and inner aspects – the physical and the psychological – and each realm responds to our deeper exploration with pearls of wisdom and the certainty of personal evolution.

SCORPIO 6

A GOLD RUSH

(AMBITION)

RUDHYAR: THE GOLD RUSH TEARS MEN AWAY FROM THEIR NATIVE SOIL

LONGING FOR MORE

Greed is a distortion of a more wholesome appetite for increasing our life experience

The capacity of Scorpio to intensify feelings at any cost can be expressed as a greed for wealth as a means of becoming more closely involved with society, although it is not so much the gold that is the issue as the intensity of involvement. Equally there is a noticeable acceleration of the pace of life as a seeker's avidity for experience grows with each new aspect of realisation, and until that appetite in meet they can be quickly drawn into any promise of deeper involvement.

Possibility is made known by those who creatively reach out and make claims

Let's first make the observation that gold-rush greed is a distortion of a quality – and it is a great danger risked by those who have ambition. Yet ambition itself has positive aspects – the urge towards self-disclosure and self-improvement. The world's possibilities are made known by those who reach out and re-create them.

It is easy for us to determine that appetite itself is wrong – but typically it is those unable to achieve wealth that make such a determination. People who rush towards the opportunity for superabundance are freely expressing an almost universal drive towards betterment.

How can we really doubt that material abundance is an aspect of achievement – since evidence of this is all around us? Genuine enterprise is the outpouring of enthusiasm and appreciation of plenty, and typically it wins its own rewards.

We are challenged by life – and this is our great good fortune, because otherwise we would not and could not evolve. That which pulls us through the trials is so often the prospect of reward. The greater benefit is in personal development, yet the motivation is frequently more venal.

It shows intelligence when we direct our attention and energy in pursuit of a goal, and it shows initiative when we exploit natural resources to achieve our ends and fulfil our desires.

Any lack of discrimination, an irresistible desire for easy money, and indeed any unbalance between taking and giving, needs to be carefully considered and addressed. Ecology is the study of sustainability – and applies on a personal level as well as global. If we are out of kilter, then certainly our health will suffer – whether mental, emotional or physical, or indeed all three.

A deeper contemplative approach to this question shows how we rail against superficiality and denial of potential. We feel as gods – we want what we want. Instinctively we expect fulfilment as a given – and yet the world generally speaks through the language of scarcity and disappointment. It is altogether healthier if we choose to be independent of this sickness of pessimism, and strike out seeking our fortune.

SCORPIO 7

DEEP-SEA DIVERS

(INVOLVEMENT)

RUDHYAR: DEEP-SEA DIVERS

TURNING WITHIN

Seek the wealth of the inner world with the same enthusiasm as others seek gold

An equivalent passion to the need for outer experiences is felt for inner understandings. Depth psychology is as little explored and understood as is the deeps of the ocean; it is a recent development in human knowledge. Yet on the path it is seen that a major aspect of our attention is drawn to find out how other people operate, what they feel, what motivates them and what they believe in. Without discovering these things in others, we cannot come to know ourselves.

Deep involvement in life comes from plumbing the depths of our experiences

The relatively recent focus on the hidden workings of the mind, in psychotherapy, shows how we all have aspects of our personality that we are reluctant, often afraid, to examine. The image of a diver conveys the sense of one who is truly willing to get to the bottom of emotional questions. This impulse indicates a person of true integrity.

Such an enthusiasm to plumb the watery depths of all emotion will inevitably lead to an intensity of involvement with people. This approach is not always comfortable for others and without moderation can lead us to become disliked and therefore perhaps somewhat antisocial.

We are encouraged to remember that all relationships and scenarios hold unlimited scope for self-improvement, and we can welcome each not only as an opportunity for further expansion of our horizons but also as a gateway to open up further aspects of the heart.

Self-fulfilment is the result of pursuing this approach with an insatiable appetite, when problems are to be seen no longer obstacles; they are grist for the mill. We rise to their challenges, joyfully testing our skills and seeking ever more demanding examinations to test and evolve them.

True exploration has to take place on both the outer and inner dimensions of experience, and to the fullest reach of our capacities. This is because the secret self is revealed only at the edges of courage and dark depths of feeling.

Persistence on this course of action leads us to a very insightful perception of people and their reasons for being and doing. We can penetrate the vital core of human motive and make-up.

The tendency towards escapism exists – we look so deeply into our own unique universe, that we can get a little lost and unworldly. For a while this is acceptable – yet it must not be allowed to become a life-path.

SCORPIO 8

THE MOON SHINING ACROSS A LAKE

(RAPPORT)

RUDHYAR: A CALM LAKE BATHED IN MOONLIGHT

STILLNESS

The secret joy of the inner world is for those who know how to find peace through stillness

Passion whether for outer attainment or knowledge of emotional processes is an overwhelming distraction and keeps the mind from stillness. It is in calm serenity that love finds its home and with it comes peace and joy. The idea that we need someone else in order to know love is false, as indeed is the quest for self-knowledge if it is based on the idea that it will produce contentment. Rather, we choose stillness and learn to find it through meditation and then notice that all else follows – worldly success, inner awareness and most importantly the presence of love, which we see wherever we look. Love is cause not effect; so is peace.

Soul empathy creates a powerful, subtle influence

Some would see as magic the special atmosphere generated by natural forces such as moonlight reflected on a lake, where all aspects of a scenario find mutual rapport. Others would recognise that in fact eternal harmony is the outer expression of an enduring inner rapport, an alignment with our higher selves, which can be harnessed and made to work according to our will.

Indeed, we can learn how to call on magical states of being within ourselves and in our situations. This is especially helpful when we are coping with inner ambiguities that require us to make some kind of psychological adjustment and reorient our perceptions toward more helpful attitudes of mind and heart.

We know that rapport is a feeling of fellowship. It is much more than just a feeling however, since it is a tool by which support is given and received between people; it is felt as empathy and strengthens our courage. It creates the conditions wherein the whole becomes greater than the sum of the parts.

We can gain mastery over the conditions of our lives when we know how to apply such knowledge of empathy – so that the magic of rapport unfolds. This allows us to bring a seductive sweetness and beauty into our connections with people and elegance dealing with things so we gain quite extraordinary subtle influence.

This works by offering full involvement – especially in the depth of an emotional moment. We often experience this as yearning, and we allow our desire full rein so that it becomes the overarching reality that engulfs us.

The danger with such a powerful emotional nature is the risk of becoming lost in an undisciplined imagination. We tend to create whatever we passionately imagine – for better or for worse. We must not lose contact with the hard facts of physical reality and of course the mind's rationality of approach so that a somewhat balanced line of attack may be found. Also it's of great importance that we guard against negativity, and constantly affirm optimistic outcomes, otherwise we attract the worst as well as the best.

The human heart has its own compelling need to find a way to release pent up feelings. We need to attend to this demand for expression, because if it were allowed to build up it would become a force of overwhelming strength – then an explosive uncontrolled discharge occurs, one that is unlikely to be very helpful to us.

SCORPIO 9

DENTAL WORK

(PRACTICALITY)

RUDHYAR: A DENTIST AT WORK

DESTRUCTION AND REPAIR

Our ego-motivated life style bring us to find inventive ways to cope and re-balance

A calm person tends to be more careful about lifestyle, respectful towards body and conscious about what they eat. Stresses of social pressure lead us to take food that is harmful to teeth, which were not made to process so much sugar, salt or fat. Dentists were invented to overcome this issue, arising through unnatural behaviour. We all have capacity to find a way to work out solutions to the problems we encounter whenever we wander too far off the path of what is natural for the body. At one level, the cycle of all life is one of destruction and repair.

We are required to make known to the world our best sacred vision

On a very simple level, we can see how it is thoroughly necessary to keep good care of our teeth. Dentistry is a real and important practicality, and demonstrates a relationship between the individual – who has the need for expert help – and society, which provides it. The high reward for taking care of our teeth is having good teeth – the same principle applies to everything else in our lives.

This is as true for the other dimensions of life as it is for the physical. We need to approach all things with a continuous, conscientious attention to the needs of self-renewal, whether spiritual or phenomenal, social or individual.

In important ways our relationship with our community is symbolical. It corresponds to the wisdom we have gained about the practicalities of living a spiritual life within the constraints not only of physicality but also of our associations.

The highest measure of a person is how well they demonstrate their spiritual attainment in everyday interactions and undertakings. Involvement in life, through projects and connections, will always test the authenticity and validity of our characteristic choices.

Entrusted with the divine spark, we have a sacred stewardship to fulfil the potential of such a privilege. Our mission in life is to dramatise our defining qualities and most subtle realisations in a practical form, so we are required to make known to the world our most inspired sacred vision.

Dental work is an artificial compensation – a remedy for previous imperfections – and it is surely better to do the right thing early than to repair the damage later since prevention is better than cure. Yet some people are shallow, lazy, immature or simply content to accept the false and easy; either they cannot see how short-sighted is this strategy or cannot find the necessary power of will.

However blessed we may feel to have achieved a measure of freedom through spiritual attainment, without involvement in ordinary life such achievements lack the necessary depth of meaning to bring true happiness. Yet, when our creative ingenuity is completely explored and brought to the service of others – as dentists, clerks or poets – then inevitably we find ourselves favoured with good fortune and joy.

SCORPIO 10

A FELLOWSHIP SUPPER

(FRATERNITY)

RUDHYAR: A FELLOWSHIP SUPPER REUNITES OLD COMRADES

CAMARADERIE

Group activity generates a deep sense of belonging, and willingness to help others

Sharing in life's activities with others binds us to them not only during the activity itself; there are feelings created that can endure over surprisingly long periods of absence. What occurs during the sharing of our lives is the creation of a group identity with its own personality, beliefs, code of conduct and atmosphere. This is certainly a real and important aspect of who we are – our comradeship is a higher-order aspect of self-expression and self-discovery.

Society is the context for self-expression

Fraternity indicates a very particular type of human interaction. It is not parental, nor is it sexual, yet it is intimate and as influential in building society as these other types of involvement. Brothers, sisters, and neighbours expand our world in a special way – one that requires us to show a high degree of personal responsibility and self-awareness.

The simplest of everyday requirements, such as eating supper, is directed by the physicality of our being. It seems so trite to bring attention to such a self-evident truth – yet there are those who fail to appreciate quite how fully our lives are arranged to meet our physical needs.

For example, we form the fellowship of our social connections with a really clear understanding of how such ties will attend to our essential requirements. On a basic level, we need others to help us through every phase of life, in the same way that certain animals could not survive without living together in a group.

Typically, there is an inclination to live out these animal tendencies and surrender our individuality, but this is to be resisted if we are to maintain our integrity. This attitude of resistance is not something that our fraternity approves of at all – in fact there is a real risk of banishment if such self-expression goes too far away from the median level of behaviour.

The grooves of communal activity and shared experience are in place not to avoid self-expression and self-determination, but supposedly to help channel these important qualities of individual life within the context of shared needs and visions. Still – we do have to make a claim if we want to cut our path differently from the common, communal direction of purpose.

In one sense, there is no mystery here at all – this is how, in everyday ways, we offer practical support to our community – we do what we do in order to invest in a society that allows an acceptable degree of self-expression.

But only up to a point. If we surrender independence then we lose the very reason for our life, because we fail to encounter our own destiny, lost as we are in the group experience. Our highest responsibility is to ourselves, and society is just the context for that, not the superseding validation of it.

SCORPIO 11 – 15

SECURITY

Here we study our efforts to achieve communication at the level of group consciousness of the species. We have to ask ourselves why we are willing to put ourselves to inconvenience and risk for others, and why we are willing to command and obey. Most assuredly we do not know all the answers to these and so many other questions and we have invested hugely in the development of possibilities to exchange views and information with vast numbers of others. This accelerates us all towards the possibility of an unfolding consciousness of our species-self, and at this exalted level we no doubt will have quite unimagined creative urges and possibilities.

We are very vulnerable – that simple fact determines so much of our lives and our choices. We are puny when measured against ordinary natural forces, and we only manage to thrive when we collaborate with others. Perhaps the riskiness of life and the miracle of survival are often forgotten, yet when we do remember, then it makes so much more sense to attend fully to the matter of core importance – security. It may well be an advanced spiritual principle to trust and surrender but it is equally an enlightened material principle not to. As the Sufis say "Trust in God, but tie your camel." Let us also note that security is as much a feeling as it is a configuration of physical circumstances. A surfeit of wealth can be amassed yet we all know that it is not dependable. What is trustworthy is the sense of being stable within a circle of mutually inter-dependent helpful, reliable neighbours and associates. Staunch adherence to social norms is a strategy to create such emotional wealth that stands up in hard times and generates a deep inner condition of anxiety-free wellbeing.

SCORPIO 11

A DROWNING MAN RESCUED

(SAFETY)

RUDHYAR: A DROWNING MAN IS BEING RESCUED

ALL FOR ONE AND ONE FOR ALL

An attitude of willingness to take care of strangers in danger that defines our humanity

When we consider what it is about our race that distinguishes us as the rightful stewards of our planet we perhaps would say 'our humanity'. By this we mean that we have an in-built sense of responsibility for the well-being of others even strangers, and if they are in peril we would even risk our own safety for them

Projecting faith into the future makes us safe from danger

The image is of rescue; we get in danger and are saved. We have to learn that it is faith that ensures this, as a reliable foundation for all our adventures. If we project our faith into the future with enthusiasm, then we are safe from succumbing to danger. Certainly there is risk – how else would there be adventure? Yet faith is of spirit and is inviolable. Our general picture of a mature, wise individual is of one who is not drowning, who is always safe from life's vicissitudes and emotionality.

The general population by contrast is given to hysteria. This is a condition whereby a strong, often dangerous, feeling is transmitted throughout a group, overwhelming the possibility of the individual to act rationally. Transient excitement dominates the person, who then makes decisions based on silly ideas. The most obvious example is when Cupid strikes, but political propaganda and football games, pop music and TV programmes are all included here.

The antidote for this form of mental disability is mostly found in our relationship with Nature, and the resultant sense of beauty, tranquillity and wonder that soothes the heart. The assumption made here is that our communing with the real physical world is an expression of a spiritual dimension to our lives.

It takes a degree of courage to practise enthusiasm and faith – since it will typically be challenged and attract the strong possibility of becoming marginalised in society, a society of the fearful.

This eagerness to live is the hallmark of soul consciousness. The soul is the eternal aspect of our individual existence, and has no need to settle for anything less than fulfilment. As long as it has enthusiasm, it will engage repeatedly with any scenario it chooses, until it has come to the understanding required.

The corrective processes of life often operate when we are close to ultimate danger – at real risk of loss of life and limb – because certain biological and psychological functions are only awakened in emergencies. If we avoid physical danger then we cannot strengthen these aspects of our nature, and we are diminished.

When we notice ourselves feeling fearless and indestructible, when we throw caution to the wind, when we have faith that whatever occurs, all will be well – then, and only then, we are in alignment with soul consciousness.

SCORPIO 12

AN EMBASSY BALL

(DISPLAY)

RUDHYAR: AN OFFICIAL EMBASSY BALL

DIPLOMATIC SABRE RATTLING

Display of power is an aspect of peace – disinclination to attack a strong neighbour!

In contrast to our willingness for self-sacrifice, we also have an inclination to form hierarchy. By this is created a firm social structure that supports privilege, leadership and obedience. Notwithstanding the inherent high risk of corruption, it provides a platform for diplomacy where the ruling elite are able to struggle for supremacy amongst themselves and against foreign powers without resorting to physical violence. It is necessary because until 'the chips are down' allegiances are not tested and proved – and this is a requirement if to experience group consciousness.

Loyalties enable us to experience devotion

It is irrelevant to animals and angels what we wear, or say, at an embassy ball, although to ourselves and the other guests, these things actually classify who and what we are. Our very individuality has no definition except as it is framed by the general background of what society values.

A stable and fulfilling life requires us to develop and maintain loyalties, and anyway without this, our need to demonstrate devotion is thwarted. Such loyalties are all too easily misplaced and need continual reappraisal. Any inappropriate allegiances formed earlier – perhaps naively in the mistaken folly of youthful permissiveness – need to be re-evaluated and corrected.

How we choose to behave eventually comes down to what has practical worth. A meaningful series of choices is arrived at by the process of discarding what is meaningless, for example empty shows of conformity. Yet without some degree of self-dedication to our community and its shared values, we will find ourselves eventually unsupported, alone and adrift.

From time to time it is meaningful and healthy to show where our commitments lie. Such display is the authentic externalisation of an evolving inner truth, and which we could never even know clearly were they not made obvious as a public statement.

Civilisation evolves within the creative tension between the haves and have-nots. High-achievers at the ball may feel the need for recognition and reward, to be motivated to their highest efforts to raise society, but if this degenerates to a smug demand for privilege, then certainly decay and exploitative corruption are close at hand.

The politics of exploitation are disguised with empty words and false smiles. The idealisms of youth are of course tempered by the experience of how power operates in reality, yet if there is to be justice and the general sense of wellbeing that goes with it, those of privilege must prioritise the use of their resources with good conscience.

By the time we become sufficiently mature to shoulder the burden of collective responsibilities, we will have developed the ability to influence collective morality by demonstrating not only that our own life is stable, but also that we can moderate both our idealism and our ambition.

SCORPIO 13

AN INVENTOR EXPERIMENTING

(CLEVERNESS)

RUDHYAR: AN INVENTOR PERFORMS A LABORATORY EXPERIMENT

SEEING HOW EVERYTHING CONNECTS

The discovery that all things are interconnected is available to seekers of knowledge

As a species we are driven towards greater and greater achievements as our curiosity pursues knowledge. The knowledge is not only 'how' but also 'why' - our experiments are both material and philosophical as we try to discover the meaning of life.

Nothing we ever encounter is beyond our ability to deal with

In order to secure independence from others, it is necessary to become much more self-dependent. In fact, until we do so, it is unlikely that we'll discover our hidden assets of ingenuity and resourcefulness, and thereby gain unlimited access to freedom of self-expression.

When confronted with puzzles, the mind, and its versatile intellect, delights in the exploration of options and possibilities. The greater the effort expended in finding solutions, the greater the joy.

Taken to a deeper level, we can apply the quicksilver mind to a particular area of life and creatively develop a special niche for ourselves to achieve social value. All of our situations are puzzles to solve, and the solution to each is, eventually, evidenced by a feeling of happiness.

By this process, greater accomplishments than we imagined will be within reach, although of course there is always the proviso that a serious degree of application must be presented to the task in hand.

We come to understand that this technique is useful in each and every aspect of life. The mind truly is able to come to grips with anything and find a new perspective and a constructive response. Nothing we ever encounter is beyond our ability to deal with.

When taken to a committed level of interaction, the contribution we have to offer is entirely unique – and, in the context of the specific place and time in which we operate, that makes us special and important.

There is a constant danger that we give in to a sense of complacency and indulge a feeling of helplessness or being overwhelmed, deferring our dreams of creativity to a later occasion. The remedy for this is to put aside fears and expectations of failure, trust in our undiscovered talents, and enjoy the spontaneity of mind – the prerequisite of genius.

SCORPIO 14

TELEPHONE LINEMEN AT WORK

(ATTACHMENT)

RUDHYAR: TELEPHONE LINEMEN AT WORK INSTALLING NEW CONNECTIONS

NETWORKING

Creating networks of cooperation and communication is essential for building community

Insofar as none of us could ever access the full picture, therefore complete knowledge, we must interact with others to listen and to share our own ideas. The quality of these interactions is inextricably bound to the quality of the communication methods used. We learn that linguistics has great importance, yet so too does the technology that allows the exchange of words – the printing press, telephone wires and the Internet etc.

Higher intelligence is responsible for lower

It is good to notice any urge that we may feel to interfere in the private affairs of others, because this inclination speaks of our lack of appropriate self-centredness. We must develop inner control to contain ourselves and resist inappropriate concern for others' business; otherwise confusion about who we are will be the result.

Nevertheless, all affairs interconnect, in other words there is interconnectedness between distinct things. The outer dimension of all things forms a network, while the inner depth is beyond reach, having a transcendent quality.

It requires a certain amount of attachment to connect with what is meaningful in a thing; this is because everyday living is so complex. To grasp meaning through the fog of this complexity is beyond mind; it requires feelings also.

When we do, what emerges is the power of realisation. This fills the gaps between things with the magnetism of awareness. It is then also seen that there is a link between all phases of existence. Therefore neither time nor space can separate things in essence, although of course in appearance they do.

With a vision of self, expanded throughout eternity and connected to all forms, we can lose perspective. Self-specialisation is the only refuge and the only wisdom. If we try to be everything, then we are nothing, we have no substance. So we need to use the force of will to become something in particular – and we do that by focusing on the appearances of what occurs to us, and forming our identity around that connection.

Maturity expresses itself through the practical application of the principle that higher intelligence is responsible for lower. Therefore we assist those who have not our degree of awareness and we demonstrate this universality of involvement with compassion.

In turn, as lesser we serve higher; we take our place in the greater scheme with a sense of exaltation that we are participating in the mystery. It is of no consequence whether master or slave because both depend upon the other for self-identification. Being neither is true freedom.

SCORPIO 15

CHILDREN PLAYING AROUND FIVE MOUNDS OF SAND

(NAIVETÉ)

RUDHYAR: CHILDREN PLAYING AROUND FIVE MOUNDS OF SAND

FIRST STEPS OF HUMANITY'S SPIRITUAL BREAKTHROUGH

A very few people have awakened, however they are yet as undeveloped as children

Numerologically the number 5 is associated with the capacity of Mind to penetrate further into the unseen realms to discover and create new forms for universal ideas. Few people are truly creative and those who are invariably are still 'playing around' with this extraordinary gift. Humanity is on the brink of a new phase of being and those with the creative flair will be called upon to indicate how we can do things differently.

Being true to oneself is paramount in all things

A child does not concern itself with philosophy or morality overmuch; it plays. As we reach further into the disturbing complexities of fulfilling personal ambitions and social responsibilities, we would do well from time to time to remember who we really are and what we really love to do. Being true to ourselves is paramount in all things, and a child has no need to be reminded of this self-evident aspect of living free.

People get caught up in social niceties, so when we openly express our own innocence we can help them find theirs. It's rather unusual to meet someone who, in a world beset by ambition and fear, opts to retain a naive sense of fun. Such people are often well liked since they have an atmosphere of purity, and reluctance to judge others. They are trusting and light-hearted, and can often impact upon others in playful ways. Though this may appear a rather simple behaviour, it is not without profound consequences. Generally people like – and need – to be helped to relax, those who can do this tend to gain influence.

We each have the gift to discover new and fascinating ways to be who we are and to find something worthwhile in any situation and all experiences. This is life lived in innocence.

Whatever comes up – be it easy or difficult, pleasant or challenging – we have within us exactly what it takes to cope and gain satisfaction. The best of us still lies dormant as an unrealised potential and will only be awakened – often with easy spontaneity – when its time has come, and when the need arises.

There is a question of reassessing, and perhaps reorganising, what is worthy of our committed involvement. And here we can gain insight by remembering the child within, who knows intuitively how, and with what, to become completely absorbed – and thus make it meaningful.

To live a life without much profound purpose, punctuated by a frequency of inept responses to what occurs, is soul-destroying and symptomatic of someone who has lost their sense of *joie de vivre*.

Trusting the inner integrity of human spirit, we simply have naively to meet all events as they come, and know that we are always good for purpose.

SCORPIO 16 – 20

UNVEILING

The crucial difference, the single most important factor in setting ourselves up for a joyful, creative life experience is faith. Not blind faith; it has to be intelligently found, tested, reworked and evolved. Yet when a person claims it they are free and clear. No imposition can then occur, no false dogma has to be unpicked, and no outside authority could ever hold sway. The mind becomes free from worldly constraints of habit and pessimism and is able to communicate realistically and well with the highest aspects of self, and indeed higher beings; then all questions are answered.

As long as we are hiding something, then we are vulnerable. The final level of self-assurance is evidenced by the willingness to expose everything allowing whatever comes to do its worst. All polarities are illusion – and false unless the reconciling third energy is identified. Good and bad, birth and death, existence and non-existence – these are secondary realities born of the prime causes: duality, phenomenal life and transcendent truth. On a personal level, simply put, it is impossible to unveil ourselves without unveiling the world at large – as indeed the mysteries of the world cannot be made known to anyone who stubbornly resists a radical process of self-inspection. By this alone can we become firm in our principles, firm in our resolve to deepen awareness, and firm in our commitments to society. Such a straightforward approach to life bestows spiritual authority and a mysterious power of insight into the secrets of other people and the affairs of the world.

SCORPIO 16

GIRL'S FACE BREAKING INTO A SMILE

(ACQUIESCENCE)

RUDHYAR: GIRL'S FACE BREAKING INTO A SMILE

GESTURES OF FRIENDLINESS

A simple smile can change how we attract relationships and experience warmth

Generally speaking, animals do not smile, it is a defining human characteristic and it applies not only the ability but also the willingness to choose harmony and faith over fear and conflict. A smile is a very powerful device that promotes goodwill and the smoothing of the way.

Acquiescence is not self-betrayal when it reveals wisdom and promotes harmony

We may try, through modesty or caution, to veil the mystery of our being, yet the truth will out. In essence, nothing remains forever hidden, so ultimately our value and our values must bubble to the surface and be revealed.

Humans are friendly by nature; it shows in how we respond to others and to animals. So, try as we might to hold our clench, there are social forces that compel us into dramatizing our inner need for sharing. Sometimes we simply have to allow ourselves to be vulnerable – and be seen as such.

Acquiescence is not self-betrayal when it reveals wisdom and promotes harmony: it is a giving of the heart. If wisdom is stubborn then it is not wisdom, and should not be accorded much value.

The core of oneself must be revealed in order to be examined for authenticity. Everyday life is certain to push us to dramatise inner truths, so that we come to be seen for who we are. All illusion and self-deception is at some point eventually exposed.

What dresses our essential being is the veil of personality. It is magical, and has an uncanny ability to conjure up the exact circumstances of our lives. This is charm. With charm's powerful grace desire is realised.

Such a power is constant temptation. The problem is that we can so easily misinterpret our indiscriminate attractions towards pleasure as if they were a revelation of a deeper truth, whereas so often we have simply lost the connection to essence-self. To guard against this we need great sensitivity to the subtle intuitive clues of conscience that add depth to our realisation of authenticity.

In the end we learn that nothing is ever truly hidden. Yet nothing can ever be truly revealed. So we can elegantly employ simple things to deal with great and complex obstacles, a smile that turns enemy to friend.

SCORPIO 17

WOMAN FATHERS HER OWN CHILD

(NUCLEATION)

RUDHYAR: A WOMAN, FECUNDATED BY HER OWN SPIRIT, IS GREAT WITH CHILD

COMPLETE SELF-DETERMINATION

When self-empowered, there is no need to get permission on how to behave or think

Fully to direct faith inwardly is a path of total self-determination; then we can create for ourselves. We create our own sense of what God is, what is the meaning of life, and how to proceed upon our own authority unencumbered by the constraints imposed when personality is shaped by rewards and sanctions.

Anarchy is the enlightened behaviour of a self-realised being who needs no master

Nucleation is forming a nucleus; the initial process in crystallisation. Virgin birth is image of creating our lives out of our own visions rather than reacting to externals, a symbol of one needing no permission to realise their dreams, capable of self-referential decision-making, They become the centre of their own circle of influence.

We have ideals, which are the sum total of our best dreams, and yet the journey from their conception through birth to full physical realisation is fraught. Our identity is shaped; are we sincere? Our visions are challenged; are they true? If we lead our circle with borrowed ideas, then the charismatic force is not optimised.

If authentic, we grow in power and become the pulse that inspires those who orbit around us. We fulfil this role with integrity being aware of the heart centre, trusting that the heart knows the voice of the soul better than the mind. We will only be at peace when we reconcile the centre of our chosen world with the centre of self. When we find a place that continually, joyfully and deeply touches the heart, then we have located our world.

Consciousness evolves through the eternal conflict between principle and practice. The highest within us seeks far and wide to establish its place in the world. The quest takes us to many strange and wonderful locations, where we have to take on some of the thoughts and attitudes of strangers to discover whether it feels right to be part of their world. This journey of discovery is the external circumstances of our lives.

The responsibility for leading a group is not at all comfortable for the soul, whose essence is freedom and who rebels against any constriction. Hence we see the need for the group's visionary heart to be in alignment with our soul's, as a further expression of our own vision rather than a compromise. Then the soul can refine itself, and so evolve, through involvement in harmony with the group rather than at variance with it.

In fact any inclination that spirit may have towards escapism is evidence of a lack of responsibility. Escape into our true heart-centre is a spiritual liberation that needs no excuse, whereas escapism is impotent rebelliousness against the perception of a more powerful authority.

To be free to be oneself, there are huge challenges. Yet development of knowledge through experience requires them. The more freedom, the more, because freedom is empowering, and power always goes hand in hand with responsibility. Yet power and freedom are strange bedfellows and, ultimately, mutually unsustainable.

SCORPIO 18

WOODS RICH IN AUTUMN COLOURING

(FULFILMENT)

RUDHYAR: A PATH THROUGH WOODS BRILLIANT WITH MULTICOLOURED SPLENDOUR

SELF-TRANSFORMATION

We can raise ourselves to become one who can decide and determine what will occur

The cyclical nature of life is imposing; it gives no choice about whether winter is coming or not. Yet for the free, realised being, even this is a choice. The self-determined creative mind grasps what an imprisoned mind cannot. When we look out through our eyes we see nothing more or less than the prison we have constructed out of our repetitive expectations. The realised mind is free to change its expectations.

The fruit contains the seed

Our lives have stages that can often be understood better by looking at metaphors in Nature. Here we have the sense that a person's fulfilment comes in the autumn of their lives – when the richness of a colourful personality speaks of their ability to offer the fruits of their encounters.

The ultimate promise of life is achieved only through personal excellence, and the fullest experience of self. Personality is complex, and often seems self-contradictory. Yet when the time arrives, all the pieces fit in concert and create a tapestry that expresses one unified statement. When we find our highest degree of self-expression, then the diverse manifestations of our parts are brought together into genuine, optimal fruitage.

The resultant benefit of this level of synergy is so very much greater than perhaps we can imagine. We are rewarded for keeping alive all the many and varied aspects of our life and for not allowing anything potentially useful to go to waste. In time it is revealed that what at first seemed unconnected later begins to resonate. With the resultant harmony of resources and understandings more of life can be experienced in satisfying depth.

We can gain success in one field of interest yet the true achievement is to master several and gain the higher awareness that can synthesise them into a unique skillset. From this springboard we launch ourselves into our greatest creative expression; this is our life message and only we can deliver it; it is our life purpose.

A realised person's later years are graced with a kaleidoscope of fine qualities – experience, patience, wisdom, serenity, understanding, authority and gravitas – these require time to perfect. The exaltation of a forest is seen in the autumn, notwithstanding its year-round beauty. This is because the fruit of any dynamic living system contains its seed, and taken together they demonstrate the full circle of life in its fullest glory.

It is Nature's high ministry of service to every living thing – that continuance is its primary goal, with the implicit promise that evolution will naturally occur. Any potential, when its ideal is realised, will align with this dramatised form of the order and beauty of the universe.

Our best contribution to the collective beauty of our species is whatever is the best of us. We are not required to be other than who we are. It is for the fir to be green when the oak sheds its leaves, and for the oak to stand firm when the willow sways in the high wind. Each thing struggles and strains to become the best version of itself and trusts that the whole will be greater than the sum of the parts, as in an autumnal forest.

SCORPIO 19

A PARROT LISTENING THEN TALKING

(CONVENTIONALITY)

RUDHYAR: A PARROT REPEATS THE CONVERSATION HE HAS OVERHEARD

CHANNELLING HIGHER KNOWLEDGE

We can learn how to transmit communications from higher beings

A mind free of self-imposed constraints and yet still rational and disciplined is suitable for employment as a medium through which to draw down communication of a higher order. We can channel messages even though we do not yet understand them. They come in various ways – through speech, writing, creative works, dance and spontaneous behaviour for example.

Public conventionality promotes general stability; personal ideals are a private matter

Most people behave according to conventional markers about what is and is not acceptable in terms of passionate speech, behaviour – and even thoughts and feelings. This programming serves the community by constraining individuals, and establishing secure boundaries.

Within these general parameters, we have the freedom to express ourselves fully, and so we can consciously choose the shape of our personal lives. More intimately with our own circle, we examine the tensions between private principles, of our own ideas, and what we outwardly express in accordance with conventionality.

It may take exceptional skill to do this. The parroting of opinion will not be enough, but it is a first step to form rapport. In these community-building exchanges, opinions expressed have no great profundity of importance – the outer form is of no great consequence – however the atmosphere we convey has great importance, it speaks subtly and silently of our inner world of feelings.

In this way, whatever may be going on in general society, we can bring the atmosphere of our lives to a point of personal aspiration. Whether we find ourselves in 12th century China or 21st century New York, something unique about us must and will inform the tenor of our circumstances. On the level of soul, this has greatest value – because circumstances are of little consequence to the essence of our being, tone is everything.

We continually project our beloved self-image onto the current situation, and can adjust what we choose to show or hide. By this means, we select and reject which of the component parts of our deepest identity we want to expose and have measured and tested.

The danger always lies in getting caught up in idle mimicry and self-gratifying pretence, so we do need to be somewhat provocative at times in order to keep alive the hidden truth of our unconventional aspects.

The community, by its very nature, lacks depth and originality – it is designed to support parrot-like opinions. So we learn to hold alive two faces – essentially the public one that accepts, and the private one that often rejects. Yet the raw substance of our intelligence is gleaned from involvement with the community – so the private one must expand itself, to become sensitive to the continual reworking of reality, and find a way to perfect private ideals even as they tend to contradict current social values.

SCORPIO 20

A WOMAN DRAWING TWO DARK CURTAINS ASIDE

(DARING)

RUDHYAR: A WOMAN DRAWS AWAY TWO DARK CURTAINS CLOSING THE ENTRANCE TO A SACRED PATHWAY

FAITH IN THE FUTURE

A certain inner attitude makes it possible to trust that all will be well

Faith is a great and powerful liberator. When we have found its shoreline and grasped its full significance we begin an exploration of a whole new order of being alive. The veils are drawn aside and we see more, so much more, of what is occurring and why – and what we can do next to add beauty and love to the world. Our appetite for adventure-filled experiences is matched by our courage and curiosity. Life speeds up and the fun starts. Here is the answer to all of our questions!

The soul is courageous and free, its essence-stuff is the spirit of daring

The vitality of human life is centred in the understanding that there is no ultimate reward to be found until we cross the threshold of common limitation. Animal behaviours are insufficient to inspire us – we need more to feel alive than keeping the species going by creating offspring whom we feed and house. The enduring values that describe our species go deeper than the facade of the daily round; it is simply not enough to go to work to get paid to buy the shopping and pay the rent.

Our desire-nature, the passionate queen of all feelings, is directional. It is pointing us to whatever is the most exciting way to penetrate deeper into the mystery.

In the image, a woman has courage to risk penetrating through darkness. The twin veils of ignorance and fear have to be put aside if we are to be free.

The soul is indeed essentially courageous and free, its essence-stuff is the spirit of daring. If we feel this – and only when we feel this – we are aligning with the soul, and its eternal life-purpose to have unending adventures.

There is a psychological indomitability with which human spirit plunges ahead into every new adventure of accomplishment. We have appetite to do more, and reach out beyond what is safe and assured.

There is the need for balance – passion and reason each cooperatively engaged because taken to a level of foolishness, this quality of daring can be distorted into silly exhibitionism and crass recklessness.

Yet without some risk of foolishness we are constrained to be less than we could be. Our very life is not our own unless we grasp the moment at hand and gamble on the probability of our unassailable continuance.

SCORPIO 21 – 25

MAGNETISM

Because we have faith we know that all that we are and all that we feel is in essence good and right. It is of course necessary to adjust our circumstances in order to find a place where what is good for us is also good for others around us. Then we can express ourselves fully and spontaneously. As we find full, unrestricted and unjudged articulation of any passion, its energy-expression transforms – as indeed it must because we ourselves do the same thing. Our task is then to find a proper time and place for each of our feelings. This is linked to an uncovering of a related ability – we can read situations better because we have a clear commitment to find conditions that benefit our true authentic passionate expressions.

Sufis teach that it is not space-time that connects things; it is light. The understanding is that reality is more than physicality – that the material world is a mirror of a more subtle dimension of existence. In that world the shaping of scenarios is carried out with 'light' – or energy. Many people are aware of this – to them it is self-evident; others scoff because they have no such awareness. It has many of the qualities of electricity and it is by no means unreasonable to refer to it as magnetism. When someone knows what to do to stimulate an effect using subtle methods, then they are often described as having magnetism. It is most obviously present in those who are comfortable with certain taboos – such as manipulation, sexuality, power and truth.

Truth is a spiritual principle – an ideal that emerges by degrees as we quest for answers. And the question has more relevance than the answer, since questions are real and answers are ideal. If we approach life with this awareness, we become increasingly more self-sufficient on the level of emotion. Somehow we learn that nothing outside ourselves will ever satisfy – that questions need to be dissolved, rather than addressed, and dealt with inwardly. Friends and associates recognise this spiritual station of self-containment and find it appealing – so they radiate appreciation and admiration. To those who know how, these are qualities that can be harvested and stored as magnetism. When converted into charisma this shows as charm and influence.

SCORPIO 20

A SOLDIER DERELICT IN HIS DUTY

(DEVIATION)

RUDHYAR: OBEYING HIS CONSCIENCE, A SOLDIER RESISTS ORDERS

CONSCIENTIOUS OBJECTION

Sometimes we must follow our conscience and face society's disapproval

We are tested in to find out how deep and authentic is our conscience; there is no escaping this because spiritual values are at variance with the values of society to a significant degree. This is particularly true of armed conflict where normally the individual is forbidden to commit acts of violence because it is morally wrong but the state may demand it of its citizens because it is said to be right when 'defending the nation' even at times when the nation is not under attack. When tested on issues of conscience it is good to reflect upon the spiritual benefit of standing on matters of principle.

Through inner awareness the power of the individual transcends the power of society

The power of society is greater than we can possibly conceive and tends to force people into unsought situations, as in the example of a conscripted soldier. Yet truly, the power of the individual is even stronger. An inner awareness of the truth of who we really are makes it impossible for us to continue on a course of action that is essentially unrewarding or inauthentic.

Intuitively we know, whatever external pressure there may be, that in the deepest sense we are more responsible to ourselves than the community. Although we feel allegiance to our people, in the end our feelings of faithfulness are not best applied in service to the common good at all, but to ourselves.

To become a soldier, we put aside considerations of heart, leaving everything we hold dear. The emotional wrench cannot be soul food – it offends us on such a very deep level. This feeling is not so very different from that experienced when work duties dominate, and the possibility of full enjoyment of home and family is stolen.

In moments of truth, the inner stirrings of spirit express as a willingness to face all the consequences of true self-assertion. Whenever obligations and desires conflict with each other, the drama of life takes the form of tragedy. This promotes decision – root-level decision – as little else does.

What follows this watershed occurrence is a necessary adjustment to bring us into alignment. This deviation is a course correction to put us back on track. That track is towards a self-fulfilling vision – so it may be completely legitimate for a soldier to desert his post.

There are consequences – and whether we turn right or left at the crossroads, there always are consequences – and these are unknown and unknowable. Yet the absence of electing, for this or for that, shows no discrimination, and will always attract penalties. Facing court martial may well be of lesser import compared with soul-level self-betrayal.

At such critical points in life, we must trust in our sense of inherent divinity. We are sacred beings who know what to do – we have to do the right thing trusting that it will work out well.

SCORPIO 22

HUNTERS STARTING OUT FOR DUCKS

(ENTERPRISE)

RUDHYAR: HUNTERS SHOOTING WILD DUCKS

ASSIMILATION OF PRIMITIVE INSTINCTS

The animal nature cannot be tamed so needs to be accommodated

There is the need to find a way to channel our baser instincts so that no harm is done to other individuals. The aggressive survival instinct in man cannot easily be ditched; indeed perhaps it should not be even if it could be. In an organism as complex as a human being who can say what would result from denying a powerful instinctual drive? Denied passions do not stay long hidden.

Self-determination arises from specificity of desire and unremitting fortitude

Enterprise is an important quality to bring to bear upon life. Ducks do not conveniently fly into our larders, they need to be hunted, and hunting is a full-on passionate, yet highly sensitive, skill. If we are to fulfil our potential, then, against opposition, we need to go out of our way to harness our abilities and desires towards a given specific target.

From the moment we are born, in all things of ordinary frequency and significance, we have a marked tendency to exhibit simple, honest desire. We want what we want – that's it and all about it.

This simple imperative is the motivating force of all life, and without it we would be constrained to a low level need-fulfilling existence of no creative consequence. Yet it requires of us certain initiatives and creative imagination if we are to enact our desires and stake our claims.

This certainly doesn't have to degenerate into a callous exploitation of life, yet it does promote a complete lack of personal inhibition and frustrations as we go about our daily affairs and situations. Day to day problems need not be irritating – they are seen to offer a means, in fact the only dependable means, by which to refine our practical skills, moved as we are to perfect our abilities in order to complete our goals.

We will find the need to give up something if we want something more. Enterprising people take risks, they lose before they gain, and they understand the dynamic sequential balance in life called swings and roundabouts, where the ups and downs work themselves out in over time. In the end, we get what we go for.

However, our determination to have what we want must necessarily be measured against the constraints of society. We all need a little psychological elbow room when coping with the world; we do, yet so do the others.

The uncompromising imperative – that we enjoy freedom of action – speaks to us of the essential nature of our very existence. It is the voice of spirit, and even if it is resisted, it will never be fully thwarted. To engage it requires us to demonstrate the strength of will and unremitting fortitude that is born out of our certainty that we have the sovereign right to self-determination.

SCORPIO 23

A BUNNY METAMORPHOSED INTO A FAIRY

(TRANSITION)

RUDHYAR: A RABBIT METAMORPHOSES INTO A NATURE SPIRIT

REFINING ANIMAL INSTINCTS

Some of our baser inclinations can be trained into a higher spiritual expression

Instead of denying our baser passions we can learn to transform them into a higher expression. For example, we may notice a similarity between the energy of a zealous devotee, who has found a way to transform their lust for dominance into an enthusiastic willingness to praise God, and that expressed by a person of violence or sexual extravagance.

Imagination is transition of consciousness that endows anything with profound meaning

The ability we all have to turn a bunny into a fairy is a quality of the imagination. All things – the least of things around us – can thus be endowed with more profound meaning. This process has no limit, and a transition of consciousness is the inner requirement.

The imagination is a vast field of potential, whose kaleidoscopic reach can easily surprise and delight us. It has a real functionality. Children invent fantasies to help them deal with their troubled lives; we can too.

We have values and preferences, which are of key importance to us, and life doesn't always respond to them the way we'd like. Yet we can be creative, by power of imagination, and re-evaluate externals to come into alignment with internal needs and wants.

In this way, we can learn to remould life to suit our sense of what is right, and deal with the difficulties we encounter. This is the path of self-conquest by which each individual subordinates his naive and animal impulses to their ideals and aspirations.

The soul speaks to us through poetry not prose. The skills and characteristics of our personality are avenues through which to ensoul our lives with a grace and beauty unknown to animals and lesser beings. We are given to make the poetry of the soul known through influencing externals.

This idea does not stretch beyond what is workable in life; that would be undisciplined escapism and a distortion of a beautiful, spiritual principle.

By making the necessary inward transition of consciousness, we can imbue everything with dynamic meaning and give ordinary things a special value.

SCORPIO 24

CROWDS COMING DOWN THE MOUNTAIN TO LISTEN TO ONE MAN

(APPEAL)

RUDHYAR: AFTER HEARING AN INSPIRED SERMON, CROWDS ARE RETURNING HOME

GROUNDING SPIRITUAL EXPERIENCES INTO LIFE

We cannot sustain peak experiences, yet can bring their teachings into normal life

Whatever we decide, and perhaps manage to achieve in the moment, any root-level shift in our way of being must be grounded into our day to day experiences and behaviours or they will not stand. There are always challenges and examinations and it is all too easy to backslide. We have to find a way to bring higher consciousness into everyday life – and this is the greatest task for a devotee.

To influence the many, words of inspiration must sparkle with magnetism

This is all about how higher realisations are brought into everyday reality. Typically, a person somehow gets into a receptive state – and one example might be meditating on a mountaintop – and then has the task of making an appeal to have their message heard.

There is a dimensional difference between the first personal feeling of an idea, and the specific clear articulation of it. Until spoken, the message in fact does not even exist. However, the functionality of grounding an ideal or spiritual wisdom has as much to do with its initial confirmation as its arising in the mind of the visionary.

And going one step further, a single witness is not enough. Any aspiration within the message is meaningless until it achieves practical focus in those realms and events with which people in general are familiar. A bridge must be built between the realm of ideas and the realm of behaviour, and this must include the establishing of rapport with the audience through empathy with their specific reality.

A prophet or teacher receives recognition for their intellectual or spiritual attainment as much by responding to material concerns as heavenly. Many a brilliant concept or teaching has been wastefully cast on deaf ears – as seeds on stony ground.

Certainly we see that spiritual wisdom generates the supremacy of authority over people – yet only when applied in tangible form. In this case it can enlist spectacular support and awaken the higher potentialities of its adherents.

Even ideas are subject to entropy, so the purity of the initial inspiration is always somewhat corrupted as it interfaces with practicality. Principle and expediency dance the dance of heaven and earth – each nothing without the other, yet both engaged in an attempt to dominate.

The balance is in responding with innocent wisdom to the practical needs of the moment, yet never gullibly believing that fairies and angels will ever replace human competence.

SCORPIO 25

AN X-RAY

(INVESTIGATION)

RUDHYAR: AN X-RAY PHOTOGRAPH

SEEING BENEATH THE SURFACE TO AN UNDERSTANDING OF LIFE

Reality cannot be understood without perceiving through the illusion to the truth

As we progress along the path of realisation we find certain abilities develop, and one such skill is to be able to see through the surface form of a person or situation and perceive the inherent structure of their reality. We are not deceived by externals or transitory feelings and shows. This enables us to determine why we are at variance with others, what might be done to find proper alignment, and in simple terms whether we can help or should we leave?

Knowledge serves humanity as much as we serve knowledge

It is of course meaningful to allow subjective feelings to inform our take on reality – and yet we also have an aspect of truth that is objective. Indeed, this is called reality. We share this with our fellows, and it serves as the foundation of our lives – not only in relationship but also in self-appraisal. Our very intelligence depends upon the dependability of nature and its laws and structures.

X-rays were discovered – or invented – to further our investigations below the surface of things into the hidden aspects of what life is and does. We ourselves are revealed as we explore, and this process of analysis and comprehension in some way is useful for self-validation. We become competent in analysis as we become capable of understanding ourselves.

The appreciation of this knowledge for medical purposes speaks to our willingness to give emphasis to the wellbeing of our fellows. Knowledge serves humanity as much as we serve it.

Knowledge has magnetism in and of itself, and many are attracted to it for its own sake – yet unless we can measure it against our sense of reality, then until it is found useful it remains as art. Typically we recognise ourselves as the measure of all things – and this is grounds for profound meditation.

Taking this idea further, we are given to measure ourselves as individuals in relation to our relevance to life in general. We learn to keep ourselves fit for purpose – and our purpose is to add something to the knowledge that keeps our community functioning.

However, we must be careful not to take this measuring too far. Neither we, nor our society, are free from imperfection, so any excessive analysis will result in restlessness and dissatisfaction. It's all a question of reasonableness and balance.

Our investigations lead us to the brink of knowledge, but never to its completion. Things are only finally understood in their relationship to all else – the integrity of knowledge is that all is One. Past and future, cause and effect, you and me – are all constructs of analysis rather than true knowing.

SCORPIO 26 – 30

INVOLVEMENT

We are but specks of dust in the face of Nature's power and yet we still posture and carry out the pretence of having a significant measure of control. The freedom we feel as our birth right can indeed be claimed, but only when we understand it to be an inner condition, a state of mind. Prayer or equivalent practices make this state readily available to us most of the time but there is a proviso – that we allow the 'gods of misrule' their time and place. We will never and should never completely deny the wild, untameable nature within us.

Scorpio is made for involvement – intense, long term, transformative, passionate commitment. Without it, life feels shallow, false and untrustworthy, whereas involvements impact permanently upon our situations and character. There is some inner resistance – a voice advising that to be alone is more secure – and yet the fascination to engage is paramount. This indicates naive trust in life, a reckless, courageous disregard for self-preservation, and great strength of purpose drawn from knowing about the deepest workings of the world.

There is also a sincere willingness to offer skills and insights to the community. What we do for ourselves serves the whole; that's how everything works. We are all interconnected, and this mystery makes itself known most readily to those who give themselves fully to whatever it is they choose to do. Intuitively it is seen that, for the deepest emotional attachments, vulnerability must be reciprocated; so in a strange way Scorpio needs to be simultaneously dependent, dependable and in control. These are mutually inconsistent states for most people, yet somehow it is made possible – and how this works is the mystery of the sign.

SCORPIO 26

INDIANS MAKING CAMP

(EXTEMPORISATION)

RUDHYAR: AMERICAN INDIANS MAKING CAMP AFTER MOVING INTO A NEW TERRITORY

ADAPTABILITY

We must respond to the changing environmental conditions within which we live

Try though we may, we cannot tame Nature, nor ever will, and eventually we succumb to its ways and powers. Yet we can learn through this, by observing and tuning in to Nature how to adapt comfortably to all situations. We can guard against the worst of it by wearing clothes and building shelter but in the end we surrender. And this ability – being adaptable – is like gold since it allows us the freedom to flow without anxiety.

When we have learned how to seek, then we have discovered how to find

Acknowledgement of hardship should not imply an unambitious acceptance of things as they are, but rather stimulate us to develop stronger determination and greater abilities. Throughout the ages, hunter-gatherers have commonly relocated and, when making a new camp, expected to be able to collect whatever they required locally. Similarly, when we are in the dynamic flow of life, we find that everything we actually need, for our survival, our comfort, and all other purposes, can be found close at hand.

Not everyone notices and makes claim, yet in every moment there is a wide range and a superabundance of resources and opportunities for new and worthwhile experiences. No map or musical score exists to help us choose or reject these various options – we must extemporise in response to outer situations and inner feelings. If we think outside of the box, then even in a seemingly unsupportive environment we can find what we want.

Perceived reality is nothing more than the accumulated result of our own innumerable affirmations and rejections in everyday dealings with the world. The wherewithal exists for us to do whatever we choose, and to be whomever we decide to become, as long as we have complete faith to do what feels right according to our personal values and preferences.

Yet we do have to engage fully with our current reality in order to claim its benefits. Devotion is a force of manifestation and we create a set of life circumstances by investing wholeheartedly in the required outcome.

This teaching articulates an inexhaustible capacity for repeated self-establishment as our lives and situations move on through the changes. However, we must work with whatever arises to make it suit our purposes, and utilise whatever there is available with the clear intention to act assertively and bend things to our will.

Each of us has the gift of resourcefulness and the freedom to employ the art. To achieve self-fulfilment, we must be alert to seek and find the possibilities inherent within what there is around us and within us. Such alertness can be practised and improved; when we have learned how to seek, then we have discovered how to find.

A very useful attitude of mind, which supports this insight, is the enjoyment of challenge. When we trust in our skilful resourcefulness, then we delight in testing it and showing it. Every new situation is another opportunity to demonstrate that we can cope creatively with whatever comes up, and this facility is an essential ingredient that characterises the human species.

SCORPIO 27

A MILITARY BAND ON THE MARCH

(INTREPIDITY)

RUDHYAR: A MILITARY BAND MARCHES NOISILY ON THROUGH THE CITY STREETS

NATIONAL PRIDE

Celebration of the nation's power binds its citizens into the benefits of social compact

It may be unseemly to demonstrate achievement, and it appears to glorify aggression when this is done with a military aspect, yet the proclamation of 'capacity for violence' actually diminishes the use of it. Sabre-rattling is the human equivalent of an animal bearing its teeth, a behaviour whose purpose is to deter an enemy and limit the risk of attack.

It is poor life management to defer to social pressure to be commonplace

The military band is proclaiming its strength, and its determination to carry through a clear intention bravely and against whatever opposition it encounters. Equally, it is entirely appropriate for us to proclaim, and establish something that will endure, constantly and courageously affirming our own personal sense of reality, and having that reality be significant enough that we are willing to fight for it.

At all costs, we must avoid crystallising trivialities as the permanent circumstances of our lives. Human spirit rejects drabness entirely; anything that lacks interest lacks worth.

Rest and relaxation serve us for a while so that we can recover and recharge our batteries. Yet there is always a danger of foolish self-exploitation when we crave comfort and security more than challenge.

We need to check that the temporary compromises that we made have not sapped our strength of will. It takes resolution and audacity to break away from the comfort zone; in some ways it's like going to war. Anything of real worth requires that we mobilise ourselves into intense effort.

When we press towards worthy goals, then we always evolve. Parts of us are stimulated into expression, which would otherwise remain hidden, undiscovered and unknown. We grow – and it feels exciting.

Small matter that the blare of our self-affirmation causes others to flinch. Let them understand that such behaviour is best seen as our rejection of lesser experiences; we are not satisfied with the ordinary, and claim a larger slice of life. We are so much more than we ever knew, and so much bigger than others usually want us to be.

What previously seemed an impossible dream is drawn into the realms of reality – it becomes hope, and then expectation. Through this process, inspiration flows through us into life, transforming everything we touch. All life has a sharpened sense of vitality and potentiality.

SCORPIO 28

KING OF FAIRIES APPROACHING HIS DOMAIN

(ALLEGIANCE)

RUDHYAR: THE KING OF THE FAIRIES APPROACHING HIS DOMAIN

INNER SOVEREIGNTY

However controlling society may get, we have our inner world over which we hold sway

We maybe keenly aware of the power of nature and also of the need for ego-driven behaviours to defend against risk, and we may well live out our lives subservient to the passions and restrictions that arise from these two forces. Yet in truth we are sovereign and free, would we only learn to act like a king whose domain is subtle and lovely. If we approach life with such regal confidence then we find our expectations of self-fulfilment are met.

We must focus the creative mind only on what we want to come to pass

We demonstrate true allegiance not to causes similar to ours, but to causes that actually define us. There is but one cause that defines us completely – it is our own life. Our own domain is none other than the circumstances of our life, and we approach that domain as does a king expressing sovereignty.

Central to the understandings of wisdom is the key mystery – that there is nothing outside us other than a reflection of what is inside us. Life is a mirror, nothing more, nothing less. Some take on this knowledge as a burden of responsibility, and feel chastened as their awareness is drawn to their imperfections.

Others feel the gift that goes along with this, and appreciate the inherent promise that all developments in self-knowledge must necessarily be met by improvement in one's life situation.

Full of self-confidence, we can then put aside futile concepts of good fortune or bad fortune as though the gods were dealing our hand. We get what we deserve, we get what we are ready to handle, and it is we who call it up.

The world of imagination is powerful – it is what we imagine that comes to pass. This mystery is hinted at in the fairy king imagery. Yes we do have a considerable measure of control over our future circumstances and, on the deepest level, complete control. Yet it requires that we are capable of focussing the imaginative creative mind passionately, consistently and in detail, upon something that has never before existed – something we desire, and not anything else. Quite a challenge!

Such creative power has its dangers, especially in a poorly disciplined mind. Free will allows us to call up dragons as well as fairies. We must be careful to whom and to what we offer allegiance, and be neither fearful nor self-indulgent; both are wasteful and lead to a poverty of joy.

With practice, understanding and experience, a highly developed person will know that what they choose must come into form – when inner vision becomes clear and expectation of fulfilment becomes normal, then great achievements are realised.

SCORPIO 29

AN INDIAN WOMAN PLEADING TO HER CHIEF FOR THE LIVES OF HER CHILDREN

(EFFECTIVENESS)

RUDHYAR: AN INDIAN WOMAN PLEADING TO THE CHIEF FOR THE LIVES OF HER CHILDREN

PRAYER AS A FORCE THAT BRINGS PEACE

When our instincts get the better of us we must find a way to centre in peace

We are both soul and ego and the image of soul as mother, and ego as unruly sons, is a helpful insight. The wildness of ego has an unsettling effect upon the community and will be checked for the sake collective harmony. The chief represents the power of social censure. The mother's intercession to the chief on her child's behalf equates to soul activity moderating ego-centred behaviours. Prayer is such a process – the intercession of soul's love to moderate unbridled passions.

We must balance what we want with what society wants, and trust this process

In this image, a mother pleads to her chief and indicates submission – yet it is implicit that a good chief will protect her valid interests. In all life we need to balance what we want with what society wants, both looking after our own imperatives and yet also trusting in the community process.

We are not likely to feel satisfied if we are obliged to truckle to others in order to resolve our most important issues, in the naive hope that our priorities are theirs. First and foremost, we ask to develop a reliable effectiveness in our ability to control our world, at least to the point where the basics are not at risk – things like protecting the family from harm.

The family unit is the foundation principle of the tribe. Society must first and foremost protect the family if it is to be accepted as a force for the good. We are willing to defer to collective authority only to the extent that we feel that our nearest and dearest are protected and supported by it.

This is not feasible without forming allegiances with emphasis upon the principle of fair exchange and justice, backed up by the practice of caring and empathy. To feel both caring and cared for, we must be part of a society that responds appropriately to help balance rights and wrongs that arise as a result of our direct experience with the problems of self-fulfilment.

From our personal viewpoint, we must develop the gift for putting our priorities clearly – first things first. Without this, personal accomplishment and enabling of our dreams is uncertain at best. We feel that any diminishing of our personal aims must be offset by the advantages of communal life – yet our personal goals need only be stated clearly and prioritised for this not to be a problem. The community surely is better able to thrive when its members are fulfilled?

So any group will only hold onto its influence under two conditions. The group must invest in the welfare of the individual and the individual must invest in the welfare of the group.

A functioning society cannot emerge without each member accepting, and being made to accept, a degree of self-sacrifice to minister the common interest. To achieve this, it must function to improve the effectiveness of individual aspirations as much as its own declared common dreams.

SCORPIO 30

THE HALLOWEEN JESTER

(SPONTANEITY)

RUDHYAR: CHILDREN IN HALLOWEEN COSTUMES INDULGE IN VARIOUS PRANKS

LETTING OFF STEAM

Civilisation can tame our instincts only partly; society has to allow controlled 'madness'

Repeatedly we come to see that, whatever our best intentions, unrefined energies will find their way out. Society has evolved ways to give vent to unruly energies by offering carefully contained opportunities for greater wildness. At Christmas we are allowed gluttony and hedonism, on All Fool's Day we may more safely rebel against authority, and at Halloween we are allowed to be ghoulish and disrespectful towards the sacredness of death. It is healthy to let one's hair down once in a while.

Our inner jester challenges authority and upholds unorthodox spiritual understandings

All too often our spontaneous, but rather inept, attempts to express certain idiosyncratic aspects of ourselves, in contempt for established values, lead to nothing but social pressure of embarrassment and the consequential reduction of influence. This is because it is otherwise uncontrolled and a threat to the status quo; Society curbs the free spirit of individuals in order to protect its rule of order.

However, Society does recognise the need for the release of buoyant energies and has created events and media for the proper demonstration of informal behaviour. There are certain accepted roles at certain times such as April Fool's Day and Halloween when unusual behaviour is sponsored.

Ultimately this leads to a more genuine spiritual sensitiveness. When we let our hair down, for example by playing the fool at Halloween, we become somewhat refreshed – and our strange quirks are welcomed as a grace that enriches our community rather than being viewed as unacceptable oddness to be hidden away.

Our overboard humour is thus dignified and can even be seen as sacred. Since days of lore, the jester's function was not only to cock a snoop at overblown authority figures – indeed the Court Jester had the task to limit the King's eccentricities and selfishness – but also to keep alive some of the more unorthodox spiritual teachings.

Spontaneity is irrational and out of control, so it allows for the possibility that non-ordinary wisdom can occur, and this emerges as inherent within the unconscious bank of knowledge that the community has available. In unusual, troubled times, this can be of crucial importance.

Even if the strange behaviour has little relevance to current community needs, it does allow the individual their chance to go a little mad now and then. This release from the hard press of daily life has profound therapeutic value for everyone, not just the jester.

Society's ability to control its members, in an attempt to achieve wider and deeper uniformity, is not absolute. It is a long established cross-cultural wisdom that any regime that forbids the jester is tyranny; there must be chinks in the armour – times for rebellious energies to dissipate without danger. The same principle applies on an individual level too, we each must allow occasional moments of madness so that inner tensions can be released before they crystalise permanently into a rigid aspect of personality and thus inhibit spirit.

SAGITTARIUS 1 – 5

EVOLUTION

We are not merely passive observers of any aspect of life and we are obliged to take affirmative action to promote what we hold to be good and true. To do so successfully requires us to become more deeply aware of ourselves and others and that we each have characteristic methods and purposes, each seeing the whole game of life quite differently. It can feel overwhelming at times and we are constantly pitted against superhuman forces, the gods and Nature. Yet we have support if we would but learn how to call it up, and we have the owl's wisdom would we but learn to trust it.

The journey we are embarked upon has not just begun; it is an aspect of the eternal dynamic that links the infinite past to the eternal future. The part of us that was born recently, and will die soon, is quite absorbed in the drama of this particular personality – and yet there is another part of us that knows of the bigger game, the cosmic dimension of our being – and it has its own evolutionary agenda, which differs from, and yet is complimentary to, that of the ego.

Life is change – of course – yet the change is not random, purposeless and unpredictable. Although often hidden, misunderstood and even cynically refuted, the dynamic of life – that which drives the changes towards a particular direction – is evolution. Much as a turbulent river has its certain flow disguised by eddies, whirls and even tidal forces, the perpetual shuffling around is secondary to the forward-moving, uni-directional thrust towards its inevitable destination. When evolution is thwarted then revolution occurs – but it is simply a backlog of designated evolutionary change suddenly unjamming.

SAGITTARIUS 1

A GRAND ARMY OF THE REPUBLIC CAMPFIRE

(REMINISCENCE)

RUDHYAR: RETIRED ARMY VETERANS GATHER TO REAWAKEN OLD MEMORIES

ONGOING STRUGGLE

Life on Earth is a constant struggle against natural forces and other difficulties

We can see culture as the softer side of civilisation wherein we tame the beast within humanity by getting people to appreciate more subtle things like art and the technologies of comfort. Yet to contain Nature's violent disregard for our comfort and security at first requires a stronger approach than culture alone. The strong force that carves out our place and way to be is structured and conservative – it takes land and claims it; it is the military. Old army generals, some of whom are now wielding political power, sit and discuss how they did what they did and, importantly, why. With age comes the big life question – I have struggled and overcome, what gives that life-struggle meaning? The answer is an abstraction, a philosophy about what we have come to believe will make the world a better place.

What went before can give useful insight into what is to come

To optimise our potential, we should not spend too long nostalgically resting on our laurels, telling tales around the campfire with compatriots. Our gifts have to be repeatedly re-grasped, re-energised, and re-applied.

What is seen as contentment with the way things are, can be none other than superficial idleness; what is considered as valuing of old ways, none other than an unhealthy veneration of the past. Discretion must be exercised to know what is helpful in previous events for developing our present wellbeing.

If reminiscence is to have useful impact, then it must serve to help us appreciate more deeply each significant aspect, and each phase, of our life experiences. What went before can give useful insight into what is to come.

With such an attitude towards remembrance, during points of crisis in life we can usefully call upon our collected wisdom to sustain us and carry us through the challenges.

Besides, the connections and allegiances that have, over the years at campfires, been nurtured, cultivated and preserved, will support us in our accomplishments.

Doing nothing much except feeling and perceiving what is now present – subjective passivity – can be of immense importance, yet surely only to the extent that it is gainfully employed to build inner strength.

A periodic 'return to centre' is of great value in rebalancing and reorienting. We can find, great relevance in all that has gone before, and all that is to come, by deepening our involvement in this present moment. This may well be enhanced by placing today's events contextually within the backdrop of our fondest memories.

SAGITTARIUS 2

THE OCEAN COVERED WITH WHITECAPS

(IRREPRESSIBILITY)

RUDHYAR: WHITE-CAPPED WAVES DISPLAY THE POWER OF WIND OVER SEA

POWER OF UNCONSCIOUS ELEMENTS

Accepting the need to flow around obstacles that are beyond our capacity to influence

Notwithstanding our sense of having power to influence the future, we are quite puny on the physical level, and forces of Nature plus forces of Spirit are overwhelmingly more influential in shaping outcomes. The ocean of our unconscious drives is energised into dynamism by the winds of change that arise inherently out of the breath of life itself. We must learn that we are subject to the forces of higher and lower energies, super-conscious and unconscious, spiritual and animal aspects of self, and these are dominant streams of evolution that we can hardly control. Our task is to become subtle enough to surf the waves of change and stay with it all.

Our appetite for experience tests our resourcefulness of spirit

There is a constant restlessness of spirit in any truly alive person, especially children for example. The white horses on the breezy ocean are both energetic and beautiful – and are clues to the inner condition of our basic vitality.

This ceaseless activity is easily accommodated in our lives – we can never run out of new experiences to absorb every ounce of our energy for living.

The extent to which we can call upon this life force, through a self-quickening process, is the extent to which we prosper in terms of both a spiritual and material sense of abundance.

This is because such an appetite for experience brings with it a naive delight in finding answers to problems. When we are in normal good health, we enjoy the challenges of everyday life.

The soul's essentially attractive force anticipates the feeling of enjoyment it will have when it has attracted, identified and dealt with yet another puzzle, to test its resourcefulness.

We know when we have taken this too far because we start to get signs of irritable exhaustion.

Still, even then, a truly alive person is irrepressible and will always bounce back, stronger and perhaps a little wiser.

SAGITTARIUS 3

TWO MEN PLAYING CHESS

(ABILITY)

RUDHYAR: TWO MEN PLAYING CHESS

STRATEGIC TRAINING

Life must be strategically managed if we want to know happiness and success

One cannot excel at chess by allowing passions to occlude clarity of mind, so too in life. There is always another person to come up against as we pursue our agenda and to cope with this we need to take into account the other side of things. Where there is push there is always push-back; strategy is always met by counter-strategy, and thus relationship evolves. So too does our ability to find more subtle processes of mind – the way to reflect on the likely results and implications of our choices.

The master sees with broad vision yet concentrates focus on only one outcome

There are those whose suffering causes them to believe that suffering is inevitable; this leads to furthering of victimhood. In order effectively to participate in life this attitude needs to be corrected. To profit in every situation we need first to accept full responsibility for having brought it upon ourselves.

With this highly mature and self-empowering approach we are motivated to raise our skills, to discipline our understandings and to mobilise our fullest potential. Like the two chess players, we have chosen to engage on equal terms with life in order to refine who we are and what we can do, presumably, enjoying the process.

A secondary aspect of the development of our abilities has to do with how we present them to the world. We find that exactitude and bigotry tend to be disliked and so are usually counterproductive.

Challenges and other events that call for a high degree of confidence, and the authority of ability, are often fraught and require sensitive management, so any attempt to claim importance can undermine our effectiveness.

What does in fact optimise our ability to hold sway and resolve events to our satisfaction is concentration. The quality of genius is dependent upon sustained, single-pointed focus.

Yet this is only one side. On the other hand, we also need such a wide panorama of vision that we embrace all possibilities. The chess master sees all the potential moves and keeps them all in mind.

Thus we see the formula for success – broad vision and pinpoint focus. Each of these is a skill to be identified, developed, nurtured and practised, and yet they only begin to operate when we sit down at the table to play with a realistic hope of winning.

SAGITTARIUS 4

A LITTLE CHILD LEARNING TO WALK

(INDIVIDUALITY)

RUDHYAR: A LITTLE CHILD LEARNING TO WALK WITH THE ENCOURAGEMENT OF HIS PARENTS

SUPPORT AND GUIDANCE

There is always someone to help

As we move through the struggle of life trying to keep some balance while we take on yet another full-on challenge, it is very helpful to remember that we always have the support and guidance of a superior power and intelligence. As much as parents hold this role for children, so too do higher forces look upon us benignly ever-ready to respond to our asking for help. Whether this is seen as a higher aspect of self, or angels or spirit guides are secondary questions to the primary point – we are not alone.

Collective processes guarantee connection and encouragement for individual needs

We come into life pre-programmed to meet it all on our own terms. We are never taught of the right of an individual to be free – because it is felt as self-evident at the core of our very being. Individuality develops as we learn skills, and our entitlement to learn them is unmistakable.

We are, however, given plenty of instruction to help us awaken and master aspects of character, and a complex skill set. The child even needs to learn how to walk, and inevitably this is done with parental involvement.

Further instruction is offered by other members of our group – and this becomes a very important and dependable background to our lives. From birth to death we are able to call upon guidance from our fellows, and they will gladly respond by sharing their wisdom – from tips on where to buy good produce, to medical advice during old age.

The constant stream of apt information is often taken for granted, yet is very much a part of our strength. It is very empowering to develop a list of useful contacts. Without a network of connections, we are lost and alone.

Another quality, included within this support framework of information exchange is that of encouragement. This is quite another matter – and it speaks of humanity's underlying, dependable kindness. Typically even a stranger will lace their traffic directions with a dose of goodwill. Our entire attitude of life is constructed around the premise that is essentially helpful and kind.

As a result of this reasonable expectation of supportive assistance, we tend to reach out more – simply because we have fewer doubts about meeting a helpful stranger. This enables us to journeying on in life, through the evolution process of rehearsal and perfecting.

At the other end of this spectrum – we might imagine an isolated city-dweller, less confident of meeting helpful support from strangers, and diminished as a result. Not one who confidently takes the initiative, this person is less inclined to progress spiritually and more likely to indulge in harmful pleasures and the rut of a humdrum round of inconsequential routines.

SAGITTARIUS 5

AN OLD OWL UP IN A TREE

(NORMALITY)

RUDHYAR: AN OLD OWL SITS ALONE ON THE BRANCH OF A LARGE TREE

WISDOM OF PEACE

Wisdom is not clouded by personal preference or emotions

In the darkness, the owl sees. Similarly within our own make up is an aspect of awareness that does not sleep even when we slip into unconsciousness. However far down we may delve and journey, however grim and black life may sometimes seem, there is always a point of light that we can focus on in order to pull ourselves back on track. We may call it hope, faith, guidance or love and, as long as we walk towards it, it will act as the light at the end of the tunnel. To know of this wisdom gives us the liberation to explore the darker side of life wherein truth and power are found.

Living according to spiritual principles develops inner poise and outer success

Only when we can respond true and clear to each natural, ordinary occurrence will we know both the owl's wisdom and the tree's tranquillity. When all the glitter and glamour is removed, and a person is seen exactly as they are, then what shines through is the quality of personal dignity. This is born of self-respect and becomes a clear light in those who, with reliable constancy, adhere to their principles as a normal way of life. If we embody our deepest values in everyday matters, personality becomes down to earth and pleasingly authentic.

This dignity may be hidden beneath a camouflage of emotional and intellectual skills that entertain others to win popularity. This veneer needs to be carefully moderated because there is a profoundly disturbing risk of smugness, which is a distortion of spirit, and harmful in terms of grace and happiness.

Great poise can develop in one who shapes their world using a charismatic personality to demonstrate the balance between humility and self-expression while achieving worldly success based on spiritual principles.

This inevitably requires us to exercise a measure of self-restraint in many of the detailed activities we pursue en route to accomplishment. Difficult situations have to be handled carefully.

Compelled by an inner force, we feel that we must realise our potentials absolutely. This force is as strong as raw desire itself – because that's exactly what it is, applied fully to all the details of our ordinary lives.

Its power can catch us unawares, so it takes remarkable steadiness to hold true to what we elect to make important, especially at times when the battle between conscience and temptation is emphasised by a highly charged desire nature.

The highest spiritual principles are nothing if they are not practical in day to day terms. It is foolish to distinguish between what is, and what is not, spiritual life; life is both spiritual and material simultaneously. The beautifying of personality rests ultimately on our ability to balance and integrate both sides of this coin, the two aspects of one normality. Yet to make this easier by distancing ourselves from our desire nature is false, and we must not capitulate to society's pressure to conform, and thus become only a distorted caricature of ourselves.

SAGITTARIUS 6 – 10

HOPEFULNESS

We learn to moderate personal ambition to take others into account so that the well-being of the group can be taken to a higher level of importance than that of any specific individual, hence for example the principle of justice. Yet often more than equal to this are personal feelings and emotion, and we find we cannot reconcile ourselves to society without evolving a more mature wisdom. We find we all have the responsibility to learn and to teach the rules of our group and to find a way to deal with the force of this concept of morality that impacts so strongly on our passionate sense of individual freedom.

Youthfulness and maturity, idealism and realism, recklessness and caution are polarities we encounter and resolve as we progress in furtherance of our goals. We need to shape ourselves as a ready receptacle for the bounty, and over time this shaping is what perfects us. It takes both wisdom and skill to grasp opportunity and thereby take a further step towards realisation. Often there are crucial issues that test and define us, not the least of which is the overwhelming force of desire that cannot be reconciled with common sense. Yet we trust that good fortune comes to those who risk and commit – and this is the hopeful formula for an optimist: risk, commit, and trust. More often than not it results in success – and indeed always for those who positively define any failure to meet an intended outcome as a helpful educational process of self-refinement.

SAGITTARIUS 6

A GAME OF CRICKET

(SPORTSMANSHIP)

RUDHYAR: A GAME OF CRICKET

GROUP CONSCIOUSNESS

How to relate well to a group's shared goals and disciplines

Games are an important feature of society and have a major role to play in building group solidarity. Through the alignment with others in the context of a competitive atmosphere we learn a lot about how we can operate at the level of group consciousness. In particular we learn how well we take on board the concept that 'playing by the rules' is more mature than 'winning at all costs'. "Cheating is just not cricket", the British would say in a voice meant to underline the great worth of personal dignity.

To put principle above expediency is an extraordinary, admirable personal attainment

In any situation, we encounter unpredictable elements – we actually exist in a milieu of confusion – and seek to find a position of balance in order to bring a measure of stability to our circumstances.

Not only do we want to feel able to cope, we want more than that, we want to excel and gain success – and we need to be recognised for this success.

Some people are entirely willing to play by the rules, fully appreciating how fundamental they are in the creating of a stable society. In England the more aristocratic gentlemen would once disdain the beastly behaviour of a foreigner with the invective – '*but it's just not cricket!*' Good sportsmanship was clear evidence of a person's attainment to the ranks of civilised behaviour.

Of course there is real challenge in sport – the closest, playful version of warfare – and it is known that this is required in order to bring out the best in a person. If we can still play in strict accordance with the rules when we are threatened with defeat – then we have learned how to put principle above expediency, which is a rare and honourable achievement.

A false pretence to excellence will not do; it is always exposed on the field.

The purpose in all this is self-refinement. We cannot evolve unless we find a way to raise our game, which will only ever occur by playing tougher opponents.

Taken outside the sportsman metaphor – we see how, if we are to become better persons, we must take on further challenges voluntarily, and shape ourselves to fit within a new world of further and challenging constraints.

SAGITTARIUS 7

CUPID KNOCKING ON THE DOOR

(ALLUREMENT)

RUDHYAR: CUPID KNOCKS AT THE DOOR OF A HUMAN HEART

STIRRING UP OF EMOTION

There's always something to keep us from losing our appetite to stay involved in life

In direct contrast to group consciousness, most people also experience the emotional intensity of falling in love, a temporary condition during which period self-centred feelings dominate and our concern for social approval is often minimal or absent. There is a huge challenge to somehow bring the balancing force of consciousness and reasonableness to bear upon the situation without denying the high degree of intensity of emotional experience, which keeps the life force operating strongly within us.

A visionary person follows their dream motivated by optimism

Life is abundant. With the correct attitude of expectation and focus, we can inevitably draw deeply upon the resources that are all around, and receive rich blessings.

To do so it may well require constant renewal of our relationship with others, an individual willingness to change or refine anything and everything in our nature and circumstances, as an exercise in self-quickening.

There is an incurably romantic aspect to humankind that is brought to life in relation to others, time after time, notwithstanding frequent and repeated disillusionment. This surely speaks to us of hope and optimism. However often Cupid strikes, we always get caught again next time.

Seeking out an unattainable ideal and vision of self-fulfilment, we can go through unending social renewals, forming and then breaking the ties of association with fellows, ever moving on towards the allurement of a dream.

There is no limit to the horizon of our appetite for new experience. It is as fundamental a motivation as any other; it is creative, liberal and far-sighted.

Through this process, the integrity of our spiritual self is made known, since it is entirely necessary to become self-aware and sensitive to the needs and constraints of whatever and whoever we meet en route.

Unbridled desire, cupidity and self-exaltation are never far away, and can bubble up to take prominence at any time, yet – in all innocence – we seek only to consume and be consumed within the intimacies of involvement with whatever life offers us.

SAGITTARIUS 8

ROCKS AND THINGS FORMING THEREIN

(COMPOSITION)

RUDHYAR: WITHIN THE DEPTHS OF THE EARTH NEW ELEMENTS ARE BEING FORMED

ALCHEMY

We change, sometimes slowly and sometimes dramatically and thoroughly at the root

Sufis have long taught that the path to tread to optimise growth is a path of paradox. Two seemingly irreconcilable factors oppose each other and the resultant tension feels like a crucifixion. Here, for example, the attempt to fulfil the promise of romantic love and simultaneously be a responsible member of a group can easily create paradox wherein two undeniable forces clash – either family approval or career prospects or friendship circle are threatened or compromised.

The resolution is found at a higher level of awareness and the deepening of one's level of inner authenticity, which together create a shift in one's level of consciousness and maturity. It's hard to be aware of this at the time; however, retrospectively, it becomes clear that inner transformational shifts were occurring as a direct result of maintaining the paradoxical commitment to both sides.

Dreams are seeds of tomorrow's uncreated potential that spring from depths of the past

Persistent inner confusion is undeniable evidence of a basic misunderstanding about the nature of reality. Rocks seem lifeless and eternally enduring; yet this interpretation is insufficiently profound because they do support life, and eventually do change their form.

It's the same with actual life situations, they may not seem even slightly pliable, yet when we look deeper we can find the potential for change locked within, and discover any number of hidden opportunities.

It is always possible to take control of your own experience of the aspects of life that are meaningful to you, since that which is forming is yet unformed, and will yield to passionate persuasion.

What has been and now is, is the foundation of what will be, just as solid rock gives rise to dynamic life forms. Though our present circumstances may be slow and seem fixed into patterns, nonetheless they hold the seeds of tomorrow's uncreated potential.

So, by accepting our solid roots and learning to make the best of that which is now available, our dreams of a better future will grow out of the depth of the past.

The mystery revealed is that of composition. The refining of self is a constant rediscovery as the many components of reality are pulled into another and yet another shape and attitude, according to changing personal preferences and the creative intelligence of the composer.

In learning the hard lesson of how to find life within that which seems dead, what unfolds is an exceptional ability to mould and remould each of the many and various elements of life, such that the seemingly fixed course of events are shaped and made more pliable, so to fit the dictates of our needs and desires.

SAGITTARIUS 9

A MOTHER WITH HER CHILDREN ON STAIRS

(EDUCATION)

RUDHYAR: A MOTHER LEADS HER SMALL CHILD STEP BY STEP UP A STEEP STAIRWAY

SOCIALISATION TRAINING

A big part of life is the developing of skills to cope with social requirements

Stairs are only necessary because civilisation exists, and so it is then the implied responsibility of parents of teach the skill of climbing them to their children. As with the stairs so with all behaviour that exists to underwrite civilised society – and it is not only children who need guidance and help. As members of society we take on the implied responsibility to help others learn how to navigate our shared customs and ways. We are all teachers and guides as indeed we are all receiving guidance in this.

Education draws out the mature awareness that to serve another is to serve ourselves

The process of civilizing begins at an early age, and it is one of the primary duties of a mother to sit down with her children and talk about how best to climb the ladder towards successful social integration. We are inclined to act and react without thought, and we need to learn how to moderate and control these base instincts.

Of course, education is more than learning about the significant importance of social customs, and the penalties of non-adherence to them. It is also the gentle, conscious leading out that draws potentials into a form of expression – at the level of ideas, feelings and behaviours.

The mother is an archetype of one who serves the needs of others first. And indeed, we all can develop the mind-set of service, and extend it beyond the genetic imperative of serving our own blood. By doing so, we go well beyond securing our place in the community as a useful participant; we move into more spiritual realms of our evolutionary development.

When we have perfected the ability to recognise some need in another person and, without hesitation, readily respond with appropriate kindness – then we have raised our inner state to the advanced level of competence that equips us for all that can occur. This is how we learn to respond to each and every challenge competently.

Knowing we can cope with everything frees us to pursue anything. We then reach further, and we aspire to attain greater, more idealised outcomes.

The biblical question '*am I my brother's keeper?*' is not best seen as rhetorical. It can be seen as a subtle, coded esoteric explanation. Yes indeed, most certainly as we evolve, we have an inescapable duty to demonstrate a highly polished and enthusiastic mature social conscience. This however is not an obligation for the common person – it is a privilege for the advanced student of spiritual attainment.

As a matter of cause and effect, fruits and abundant rewards arise from this awareness and practice. Yet these are perks; the true benefit of service is the feeling of serving.

SAGITTARIUS 10

GOLD-HAIRED GODDESS OF OPPORTUNITY

(REWARD)

RUDHYAR: A THEATRICAL REPRESENTATION OF A GOLDEN-HAIRED GODDESS OF OPPORTUNITY

GLAMORISATION OF SOCIAL SUCCESS

Fame and Fortune is a goddess to serve until freed of the illusion that she gives happiness

Taken to its limits the processes of instructing everyone in social requirements becomes a force of pressure upon every individual. None manage to perfect their social skills fully, although the best of those who do rise in popularity, importance and repute – typically until their imperfections are revealed purposely and vindictively in order to bring them down. We must find our own way to deal with this inevitable aspect of group behaviour.

Nature takes care of adventurous opportunists – the lucky ones know this

Opportunity is a beautiful golden-haired goddess who rewards her adherents with abundance, especially the confident risk-takers who enjoy the process more than the product. At this level of passion Nature takes care of her own.

As humans, it is in our character to be adventurous opportunists, and in order to generate optimal opportunity we must participate in everyday occurrences energetically and enthusiastically. It is only by being this way that we become conversant with what the life-force actually is.

A bizarre self-defeating mind-set has beset the Western world for many years – one that equates spiritual excellence with material poverty. This is a distortion of the valid teaching that attachment can rob us of higher states of grace. But this is a warning against attachment not materiality. Certainly the very rich have a hard time squeezing their camels through needle's eyes – but neither are the very poor given easy access to states of serenity, and those jealous of others' wealth have the more difficult task. Truly happy people always have enough to share, never fear lack, and are free of any overpowering need for physical or emotional satisfaction.

The safest protection that we can have in any experience is full-on involvement; half-hearted is dangerous – any serious sportsman knows this. To fulfil our potential, we need to understand that the grasping of opportunity requires sure-footedness and clarity of desire – in other words, being staunch and focused.

This level of certainty is the source of, and the evidence of, an irresistible confidence in ourselves and in life itself. What occurs around us is then all good – simply the reflection of a natural wholesome self-love. The feeling is itself reward enough – yet it also generates material and spiritual abundance.

After the early childhood years, it is no longer appropriate to be overly dependent upon others for support and encouragement. As adults, we aspire towards a level of emotional self-sufficiency and practical viability that establishes a firm grip on life – firm enough to make happen what we choose to happen.

People so often speak of luck as though it were randomly generated by external forces. Not so. We make our own luck; the truly lucky know this and trust in life fully.

SAGITTARIUS 11 – 15

AIMING

Embodied perception shows that we are at the tipping point of humanity's next big phase of evolutionary development. We have personal process to go through and we all need to clear out destructive emotional patterns. Tried and tested ways of being and thinking root us into the strengths of our ancestors, yet on the other hand we have the secret to the future within us, which we can discover by extrapolating current events and be the first to see what is coming. This ability enables us to stake our claim in the future of our race. By seeing it first we are empowered to influence what is to come.

It is absurd to think we can focus our goals with fully detailed precision – we simply cannot anticipate all the changes that come about within life's complexity. Every single activity is the expression – on one level or another – of trial and error. Whether it is a marriage, a political alliance, employment or friendship, every interaction between people is subject to shifts in self-interest and the resultant rupturing of shared purpose and mutual benefit that leads to broken agreements. Not only that, people cannot escape misfortune and seduction forever, and some are so knocked off centre that they cannot fulfil their promises and duties. If we do not take these factors into account, then we will certainly be disappointed.

In order to set a meaningful course that will lead to lasting outcomes, we have to come to terms with both darkness and light and try not to judge the one more meaningful than the other. Since our aim is always necessarily imperfect, it will inevitably create both light and dark occurrences, and we must accept responsibility for both. The words sin and repent are derived from French archery terms. If our arrow is not within the range, it is without (sans) – so we need to rethink (repenser). The overlay of guilt is a relatively modern invention; the sin & repent formula is actually a common-sense rule for trial and error techniques.

SAGITTARIUS 11

LAMP OF PHYSICAL ENLIGHTENMENT AT THE LEFT TEMPLE

(RECONCILIATION)

RUDHYAR: IN THE LEFT PART OF A TEMPLE, A LAMP BURNS IN A CONTAINER SHAPED LIKE A HUMAN BODY

BODY KNOWLEDGE

The mind tells lies, the body cannot

The typical spiritual seeker has either a very impressive intelligence or a remarkable ability to trust their intuition – or in some cases both of these properties of mind. It is rare indeed to find a person who adds to this the full and passionate involvement of the physical body; yet we must if we want to optimise the knowledge. Spiritual practices have a physical aspect, registered as body states; we must know how to embody a wisdom-practice. This means learning physical attributes to do with breathing rhythms and a body condition that allows a relaxed preparedness to support a particular action. In Sufism it is said that if lacking this then the practice is 'empty'.

Earth is a laboratory for soul to study relationship between meaning and consequences

The world is a laboratory for the soul. The left temple refers to the place where we intuitively seek inner understandings, and yet there is always a reminder of the need to provide physical support as well as spiritual. In fact temples have to be managed well, illuminated at night with electricity or candles, in order to serve their intended sacred purpose.

Every reality is provided for in our laboratory-temple, not only for us now, but for everyone forever. The very unlikeliness, of this fact of existence, makes it difficult for us to grasp quite how free we are. The reconciliation of spiritual and physical is in no way different to the reconciliation between our fear-begotten limitations and the truth and experience of our freedom.

Inner, spiritual outreach leads to wider understanding, and we are encouraged to pursue such a course if we are to be free and happy. Free will requires that we choose one position, and then typically other people will compel us to come to terms with both sides of the situation that we have chosen to study. This leads us to refine personality and develop loftier spiritual perceptions.

This image is to do with optimising personal effectiveness by making the most of past achievements. Before we experience something new, our knowledge of it is limited and inconsequential. We are drawn, by curiosity and inner conviction, to try out various ways of living our lives and it is important to notice what happens as a result of what we do and say.

Nothing but confusion will come from a witless process of trial and error. We need to study and learn from our attempts and discoveries, and reincorporate new realisations into our mind set, if we are to have a clear and successful approach to life.

Of course, ceaseless experimentation with modes of self-expression has certain benefits. Without trying new ideas, we have no way forward at all.

Yet, in each relationship and activity, we need to balance meaning against consequences, cost against benefit, and bring about reconciliation between apparent opposites – things that pull in different directions.

SAGITTARIUS 12

FLAG THAT TURNS INTO AN EAGLE THAT CROWS

(ADJUSTMENT)

RUDHYAR: A FLAG TURNS INTO AN EAGLE; THE EAGLE INTO A CHANTICLEER SALUTING THE DAWN

ANNOUNCING THE AGE OF AQUARIUS

Humanity is on the verge of transformation; we who feel this have a duty to announce it

There is today a large movement, ill-defined and amorphous, which resonates with the idea that humanity is on the brink of a new age of enlightened consciousness. It is inevitable that there would those who are the first to notice what is coming – as a high soaring eagle is the first to see the sunrise of a new day – and that such people would be likely to find common cause. It is our privilege and duty to announce what we see.

Willow bends, oak breaks – a balance is sought between real and ideal

The image for this degree is rather strange, yet we can see how the flag indicates allegiance, and we see how a noble bird behaves like a common crow. This hints at the need we have to adjust – and almost falsify – our true self, if we are to find existential security.

To some extent we must conform to pressures from the environment and the community if we are to survive. All around us, everywhere and without exception, there are forces that push and pull, largely through the use of words to make claims, which are rarely substantiated, and to promote idle prejudices. We form our loyalties – we have to if we are to survive – based on these doubtful claims and unexamined prejudices, typically before we are mature enough to validate them.

Yet also we must somehow maintain awareness of what makes us unique – our own inner values, which sponsor our preferences and decisions, and for which we also feel loyalty.

This world is a place of struggle – a dangerous environment that forces us to be cautious about full disclosure. The risk is real that, through this necessary survival-stratagem, we come to a position of crystallised, permanent self-deceit.

So, in order to hold true to our inner convictions, and often against the flow and pressure of mainstream thinking, we have to maintain a clear goal that is the shining light of our dreams, to project the highest part of our unique character into the world. This idealised ambition is a true and valid aspect of who we are – a precious illumination of hope.

As this projection interacts with life, a balance is found between the ideal and the real, the dream and the matter at hand. We can best see the resultant friction as the sandpaper that smooths down a rough-cut personality, and refines fancy into project.

The willow bends in the storm; the oak breaks. The lesson here is adjustment. We need to shuffle our dreams about until they fit the circumstances available to us. Of course we need to find a way to do this without capitulation, remaining true to our authenticity of being. Sufis teach of life as an interplay of struggle and surrender; the oak struggles against challenging forces, the willow surrenders to the inevitable. We need to have both qualities plus the awareness to adjust our posture to that which is currently appropriate.

SAGITTARIUS 13

A WIDOW'S PAST BROUGHT TO LIGHT

(RECTIFICATION)

RUDHYAR: A WIDOW'S PAST BROUGHT TO LIGHT

DEALING WITH UNRESOLVED ISSUES

The past is not forgotten until we deal with what we need to deal with fully and finally

Notwithstanding the uplifting joy that a new dawn is coming, the past has still to be dealt with; karma cannot be sidestepped. Awakening people experience an acceleration of life's speed of change – we deal with what comes up and thus attract more and more such challenges at a faster and faster pace. Also we associate with others doing the same thing, and this adds energy to the spin. Then terribly painful and inconvenient life issues can come and go and leave us untroubled by grief, regret and nostalgia.

We must learn to integrate both failure and accomplishments

A widow would normally expect to receive compassionate forgiveness, yet here she is being made aware of her forgotten transgressions, in a seemingly insensitive breach of etiquette.

Nonetheless, just because the widow is sorrowing, does not mean she is free from accountability. This degree asks us to consider the extent to which we have a callous inclination to repudiate responsibility for what we have done – or if we are willing to integrate both failure and accomplishments into personal improvement.

Penalties and rewards arise, but they are not automatically imposed according to natural law – rectifications are constructs of society and, in the final analysis, subject to our own acceptance or rejection of them.

By making public our imperfections and sufferings, we help to demonstrate the connectedness of souls. Our own agonies and ecstasies are shared as part of the wider experience of our soul-group. A successful life must include coming to terms with both failure and loss, since by this integration process, we make ourselves better, stronger people. For most of us, this requires community support, even in the form of censure.

Public exposure can actually assist us profoundly with our emotional clearance. It also has even greater value in encouraging others to deal with their own ordeals of spirit, in a way that recognises their community involvement and duties.

There are better times ahead; we of faith live our lives according to this understanding – it is this that makes everything right. The almost unendurable pain of loss and grief feels to be beyond anything worthwhile – torture for the soul, and of no value. Yet this all-too-reasonable sentiment is eventually seen as unhelpful. The passing of time eases the pain and ultimately uncovers the benefit we have derived through the suffering.

The true blessing, deeply hidden within such darkness, is a spiritual light – a light that becomes an eternal refuge, a certainty that we are now forever immune from a repetition. We become a rock for others, having gained true empathy and a profoundly understanding character.

SAGITTARIUS 14

THE PYRAMIDS AND THE SPHINX

(CERTIFICATION)

RUDHYAR: THE GREAT PYRAMID AND THE SPHINX

OLD KNOWLEDGE

Truth and Wisdom are never entirely forgotten but hide in symbols and memories

It is here being taught that the spirituality of the 'New Age' is not new at all; we are in fact remembering what was once known and practised by the ancients before it was forgotten. Long ago there was a Golden Age of harmony and yet we have fallen through the Silver Age to the Bronze Age and now we are in the Iron Age of industrialisation. We have all but forgotten everything we once knew. Yet, kept alive by ancient symbols like stone circles or the Sphinx, a profound tradition of knowledge has not completely died and so can be reclaimed.

We look for assurance that our seed has potency

The divine dispensation of Free Will has been soiled and distorted. Those responsible for introducing this message of Free Will were priests and parents; they failed. This was because the power possessor, whether parent, priest or politician, would not relinquish their power. One consequence of this is that our perception of reality is not free from distortion – it was corrupted in the process of our early conditioning.

Instead of trusting authority figures to authenticate our worth, we need to reclaim our own ability to self-certificate. This has to be done on the basis of objective proof, rather than feelings of self-satisfaction. Hence the need for the Pyramid; it proves something. However, that proof is not greater than what it proves. The Sphinx itself is not of greater consequence than the one who chose to make it become real.

We live in the world and partly within ourselves. The inner world, of subjective thoughts, feelings and beliefs, is reflected in the outer world of circumstances. The criterion that establishes the reality of our outer experience is to do with endurance; if something endures physically, then it is certified as real. We see in the Pyramids an attempt by earlier giants to project into the future, and so realise, their understandings, aspirations and ideals.

This is done by making an enduring mark on events. Will our song be sung in a thousand years? A tendency toward genius exists in each of us, and when we focus our clear, single-eyed attention, then we inevitably create testimonials to that proficiency, which must take on form and endure if it is to be confirmed.

Nothing can be done alone – and our best potential is enacted from within a state of grace, the attractive force that pulls together supportive, harmonious associates who bind together in a fellowship of creative capacity.

The test of this degree is to avoid the ego-temptation of self-congratulation. This only leads us towards rather ridiculous attempts to fill the shoes of giants – instead of optimising our own unique talents and potentials.

Even the very least of us is pleased to receive certification, an assurance that our seed has potency, our vision has relevance, and our beingness is recorded somehow, somewhere. This comes from developing an effective practicality in our thoughts and deeds. Does it really work? Will it really last? This very practical approach to life sharpens the imagination so that the mind penetrates more deeply and more meaningfully into the mysteries. The outer tests of enduring reality are no less inner tests of relevancy and competence.

SAGITTARIUS 15

GROUNDHOG LOOKING FOR ITS SHADOW

(REASSURANCE)

RUDHYAR: THE GROUND HOG LOOKING FOR ITS SHADOW ON GROUND-HOG DAY

TAKING PRECAUTIONS

As they say in the Middle East: Trust in Allah but tie your camel

The future comprises two components. Certain things may happen or may not, and we cannot plan for these. But other things must happen, because that's the way life is. There are currents of change and, once a seed is planted, its destiny rides on the current of life and becomes what it must become. We can make plans about these and in fact we must if we are to stay on track. If we look at the direction of societal and economic imperatives, of political unfolding, of climate change, of population statistics and so on we can see something of what must be coming. It is best to make our plans to take this into account.

We approach the unknown with caution and wisdom

This groundhog image is of an ingrained timidity or lack of stability. These qualities are not normally considered attractive in a world that rewards power, courage and confidence.

And yet it is worth observing that there is but one process by which we move forward in life: trial and error. It is meaningful to dip a toe to test the temperature of the water – this is an entirely sound approach into the unknown.

If we are to capitalise on the situation at hand, then we have to become aware of the flow of things around us and the direction of drift of potentials. Our creative appreciation of possibility depends upon a certain degree of sensitivity to the changes. Rather than charging in headlong, we need to exercise caution and perspicacity.

This is the best approach if we are to develop a talent correctly to determine our best course of action in situations fraught with danger or uncertainty. The groundhog is looking for the shadow – the feared aspect – of the situation.

Many experiences are best anticipated and rehearsed. Of course we enjoy the spontaneity of responding to the unexpected, yet mostly our lives are made smooth, enjoyable and productive through careful planning, and taking measures to cope with rogue occurrences.

The timid groundhog wants to feel reassured – as do we. Becoming increasingly sensitive to the slightest changes in the wind enables us both to feel secure, and to take the wisest option available. Thus, we see the link between caution and wisdom.

Naturally we would do well to adjust our standpoint and direction according to these sensitivities. It is a great advantage to have a sensitive nature, as long as we trust in the intuitive realisations that occur as a result, and seek then to influence outcomes by adding a more subtle wisdom to the decision-making process.

SAGITTARIUS 16 – 20

ADVENTURE

We live in a dangerous place yet most of us in the developed world are free from the risk of being eaten by wild animals, starved or frozen to death, or dying young of an incurable disease. It would be foolish to become complacent about this, and even constant prayerful appreciation does not totally wipe out the risks that threaten us. We must take action to keep our alertness and not allow ourselves to become too soft; we need to take appropriate precautions against what might occur and even make sacrifices so that future generations can have the possibility of a good life.

The future comprises two aspects – what must be and what may be. When we have learned the relationship between cause and effect, we know how to anticipate what must be. For example, given correct environmental circumstances, apple seeds become apple trees; the Sun rises and will always shine after the rain. Yet our relationship with what may be is an adventure that demands our special attention, exemplary acuity and a willingness to become a different version of ourselves. We simply cannot know what is next – and so we must somehow hold an attitude that protects us from danger, yet readies us for opportunity. Between where we are, and where we hope to be, lives an uncharted path – labelled on maps as 'here be dragons'. Some people would see a sign about dragons as a dire warning – and others as an irresistible attraction.

SAGITTARIUS 16

SEAGULLS WATCHING A SHIP

(ALERTNESS)

RUDHYAR: SEA GULLS FLY AROUND A SHIP IN EXPECTATION OF FOOD

DANGER OF DEPENDENCY

Without self-discipline we become habituated to comforts and forget natural instincts

The wildness within us, which maintains our relationship with the freedom and spontaneity of Nature, can easily be forfeited. The fruits of human endeavour are comfort and security above all else – we do whatever we can to mitigate the risk of danger, hunger and cold. Yet the certainty is that we will become somewhat dependent, perhaps totally dependent both physically and psychologically, on those comforts – and lose our edge. People on a spiritual quest often put themselves into harm's way intentionally so to keep alive certain of their instincts, which otherwise would atrophy.

Spirit is ever alert to fulfil its desire nature

The gulls following a fishing trawler know well enough that their survival depends upon observation and competition. This is also true for us humans.

It is true to say that we do not have to grasp every single fish we are offered – because there is also give-and-take in life, and what we lose on the swings, we gain on the roundabout.

Yet there are opportunities all around us, and we are required by our uncertainty of survival to develop the gift of receiving them. This is best seen as a twofold process – first see, then take.

This image is of alertness. There is a very definite process by which sensory data comes at last to enter consciousness. The object of our opportunity is there – but do we see it? We may see it – but do we notice it? We may notice it – but do we act? Alertness is a state of consciousness that has both yin and yang aspects – first see, then take.

Spirit is neither modest nor fearful – its essential purpose is to fulfil its desire nature. It demands its full share in the privileges and rewards of human society. This runs contrary to the non-stop pressure to conform and accept that typifies our public surroundings, within which we are constrained to adopt social constraints that forbid us full expression of our urges – such as laws, conventions, traditions, morality and religious practices.

Our personal interests are served only as we maintain unceasing vigilance on our own behalf. No one else holds us first in their hierarchy of importance – and society has no respect for our personal characteristic desires at all.

Whatever we fail to claim definitely for our own purposes, to fulfil our own desires, is thereby surrendered promptly to the devices of someone else, or lost entirely.

SAGITTARIUS 17

AN EASTER SUNRISE SERVICE

(REBIRTH)

RUDHYAR: AN EASTER SUNRISE SERVICE DRAWS A LARGE CROWD

RENEWAL OF THE URGE TO LIVE

Without remembrance we forget all too easily that life is a great gift, a miracle and a joy

Winter tends to put us into closer awareness of hardship because it's cold and dark and nothing is growing in the garden. Life is only cruel for so long, then a reprieve is granted, dawn after a dark night or springtime after a cold winter. The celebration of rebirth is powerfully ritualised at Easter for Christians, and strongly underlines the spiritual aspect of this message: that we do not die; the essence of who we are is above death.

Our path is the reconciliation of two forces – individual fulfilment and spiritual fellowship

Those things that we do only on special occasions, with ritual and a poignancy of feeling, are meant to be kept special. Their specialness would dissolve and become unavailable to us if we allowed ourselves to become overly concerned with form and ceremony. Easter – and sunrise – has magical power only when celebrated infrequently.

Expansion of awareness, and the related capacity for acuity of perception, is facilitated by moving the attention towards a focus different from what our conditioned upbringing suggests. To realise the fullest extent of our immortal resources, we have to give up the senseless struggle for ephemeral awards – fame and fortune lead us nowhere in the cosmic scheme of things.

Nor is it enough simply to collect skills and explanations. Without the ability to employ them wisely, such preoccupations are as cups and certificates decorating the living room. Wisdom goes beyond them, as fruit goes beyond plant, and is held as the position of poise where head and heart have equal attention.

This attitude of attention is not just another skill; it is a new dimension of being – a place of highest consciousness, which supports the constant process of self-renewal and acts as a catalyst for everyone we meet to awaken, reborn.

Easter speaks to us not only of spiritual fellowship, but also of redemption and its consequential purification. Disregarding the dogma that religionists use to enslave minds, we act in good faith and project into the world our highest sense of eternal values, which endure even as empires and papal supremacy eventually collapse.

Our deepest urgency aligns with our basic sense of racial identity – we are human first and foremost, so we serve humanity's survival and prosperity. Yet we are of spirit, eternal and free, so we align with our desire for individual fulfilment.

The reconciliation of these two forces is our life path. We find that our contribution to the human estate is of greatest general importance and actually optimised – as is everyone's – by finding a way fully to serve ourselves and our community at the same time.

SAGITTARIUS 18

TINY CHILDREN IN SUNBONNETS

(INNOCENCE)

RUDHYAR: CHILDREN PLAYING ON THE BEACH, THEIR HEADS PROTECTED BY SUNBONNETS

GUARDING AGAINST OVERLOAD

Whether from earthly or psychic forces, we must defend against too much energy

That which is not essential within us is always subject to the perils of Nature; we live ever on the edge of death and disorder. Society through its laws and cultural norms, and parents through their authority and concern, tend to want to protect the individual, especially the child, from the dangers of too much exposure. Such protection is itself a danger if taken too far because some will succumb to its comfort and others will rebel incautiously against its constraints.

An innocent life is a joyful routine experience, with occasional bursts of excitement

Tiny children are powerless to look after themselves, and sometimes they need sunbonnets put on them. It is their innocence that makes them both delightful and incapable of self-protection – and indeed self-projection.

It is quite normal to protect ourselves by shielding away from the dazzle of the Sun – a metaphor for the glaring demands of others. Yet it is through contact with others that we manage to focus who we are and where we are going – so the absence of interaction can lead to diffusion of identity, and the associated frustration.

The many non-special interactions that we have are actually quite important when taken as a whole, even though one by one they may seem trivial and unworthy of keen attention. When we were young, playing with other children generally was of great consequence in every sense, yet each individual session of playtime was not seen as such a big deal. These easier modes of interaction are very worthwhile and yet undemanding.

There is an optimal life-path that unfolds our potentialities fully and beautifully. It is pursued by seizing, with confidence and hope, whatever opportunities that arise from time to time. This really does require that we engage with the world, and to some extent that means stressful situations become inevitable occasionally.

Full participation in everyday life can become a joyful routine experience, with sporadic bursts of more meaningful or exciting events, within a backdrop of simple, innocent wellbeing.

It is good and wholesome to launch ourselves into the world, and then to stand firm when this leads to confrontation about matters of great consequence. Yet residual tendencies towards infantile self-assertiveness need to be honestly examined for what they are, and what they tell us about ourselves.

The ideal corrective for any such feelings is normal day-to-day life. The simple things add up to complex important things, and anyway they also have their own intrinsic value in the moment. If we are doing the washing up, then that is what we are doing and we need to do it well.

SAGITTARIUS 19

PELICANS MOVING THEIR HABITAT

(FRONTIER)

RUDHYAR: PELICANS MENACED BY THE BEHAVIOUR OF MEN SEEK SAFER AREAS TO BRING UP THEIR YOUNG

SACRIFICE TO SECURE OUR CHILDREN'S FUTURE

Selfishness is not a suitable survival strategy for the species

We are living in an age where the key aspect or lesson for us all is to come to terms with our power to spoil and destroy before we ruin our environment. That we live in Nature is the cornerstone of our existence, yet collectively we have allowed our need for comfort and security to degenerate into greed and excessive fear of strangers. In Nature some animals like pelicans sacrifice themselves for their offspring – investing heavily in the future at the cost of the present. We may well find the need to do this ourselves if we want our children and their children to have a life worth living.

Life is a frontier, an exploration where refuge is momentary – a place to recuperate

The integrity of our being cannot be realised by accepting the unacceptable.

Whatever is missing from our lives here and now, will be found elsewhere at a later time. The range of life experiences has no limit, our potential resources are unending – and our skills and capacity are without measure. Any willingness to settle for less than enough is born of fear or lack of gumption.

Like these pelicans, we may have to move our habitat in order to reestablish ourselves whenever our circumstances no longer seem profitable.

Whether or not we realise it, we live on a frontier. A frontier is not an established border; it moves – as do the shifting sands of life's variables in all their complexity. It stands as a moving line between where we are safe and where we are not safe. That is the condition of all life – and is basically an antisocial understanding.

We achieve our best outcomes only as we make the fullest use of our capacity for genius. This is a non-ordinary state of consciousness that is awakened in a person – any one of us – when certain conditions arise. These conditions are the need for genius – and are stimulated by situations beyond the safety line.

The refinement and evolutionary growth of our character and soul will never occur without living beyond the comfort zone and outside of the perimeter of social approval – on the frontier of our awareness.

Spirit has the capacity for indomitable originality; nothing is beyond our ability if we would only awaken our fullest potential. Yet to do this, we have to live life somewhat dangerously as an adventure where safety is a temporary place to rest and regroup.

SAGITTARIUS 20

MEN CUTTING THROUGH ICE

(PROCUREMENT)

RUDHYAR: IN AN OLD-FASHIONED VILLAGE MEN CUT THE ICE OF A FROZEN POND FOR SUMMER USE

GOOD HUSBANDRY

We must put away some surpluses in times of plenty to cope with times of scarcity

Knowing there are hard times ahead sometimes we must do work now to guard against later neediness. A farmer will burn the midnight oils to harvest in September so that his food supply carries him through the winter. Equally by anticipating the future we can invest effort today so that we limit danger and discomfort tomorrow. This might be applied widely; it is just as appropriate for a young adult to continue their education as it is for a housewife to be thrifty with her food stock.

Fruit doesn't jump into our mouths – we need to do work to harvest Nature's abundance

Observing men working in the cold, on a difficult task, we might focus on the hardness of life, its difficulties, and the mighty task of surviving Nature's cruel indifference. Yet such pessimism is a poor choice of how to focus the mind, and shows lack of perspective.

The more helpful attitude of mind is one where we interpret everything we encounter as fully in service both to ourselves and to the community.

Nature is what it is, and affords us unlimited opportunity for self-expression and self-discovery. Whether we choose the hard or soft version is a matter of personal preference. In this example, men take on a hard task in order to procure the fruits of that task.

It is typical that we have to overcome obstacles in order to fulfil our wants and needs. The deeper benefit comes from the overcoming – in other words the process rather than the product.

It is very unlikely that we could establish the essence of who we are without receiving recognition for our talents and knowledge. Such recognition comes from the community only when we struggle to overcome, and find our way to capitalise upon opportunity.

This success is achieved according to our ability to organise Nature. All around us is a superabundance of natural resources. Yet the fruit doesn't jump into our mouths – we need to do work to release the bounty.

Failure to grasp this principle leads to wasted effort and disappointment.

SAGITTARIUS 21 – 25

EXPERIENCE

Our evolutionary path is from lesser to greater and is made to unfold by the operation of that particular aspect of the mind that dreams, balanced by the aspect of the mind that knows what is true. The strength we need, to hold ourselves together during all the many profound changes in our life circumstances, comes from our mind's clear certainty of who we are in essence. Yet the power to write the script of our future is the subtle and mysterious power of a creative, optimistic imagination. When we have both of these qualities and can balance them, then we are rewarded more and more as life develops.

By reflecting on what has gone before, and the specific connections and alignments we have experienced, we become more certain of who we are, and of what we feel capable. This stirs us to greater self-expression, and greater dedication to make our mark on the world. There are abundant treasures available to us if we position ourselves appropriately to attract them; they draw us towards them as part of our evolutionary progression.

The soul's eternal evolutionary journey is seen by Sufis as having two polarities of expression. When disincarnate, it experiences knowledge, and when incarnated it acknowledges experience. Firmly bound by the constraints of matter, there is much more to the soul's experience of life than corporeal sensuality. Through the hard authenticity of physicality, we get to see the true effect of our qualities – such as poise, courage, radiant wellbeing and optimistic imagination, amongst so many others.

An ambitious push towards an outrageously idealistic vision energises our situations and catalyses events – so that we are subjected to life more deeply, more fully and more colourfully. It is not more important, or even helpful, to know what we are 'doing' – because the soul's present purpose is not to experience the knowledge of what we are doing, but to acknowledge the experience of how we are being. Process matters, not product.

SAGITTARIUS 21

A CHILD AND A DOG WITH BORROWED EYEGLASSES

(EXAMINATION)

RUDHYAR: A CHILD AND A DOG WEARING BORROWED EYEGLASSES

WALKING IN THE SHOES OF A MASTER

By copying the behaviour of an awakened being we are likelier to awaken ourselves

It may challenge or even offend the ego to learn that another person is further advanced in knowledge than we are. And typically the less aware person is not aware of the difference, but the more aware person is – because unconsciousness is unconscious of unconsciousness whilst consciousness is conscious of consciousness. To be stubborn about this, or prideful, is seriously counterproductive. If we want to progress we must emulate someone who is ahead of us on the path and copy their way of doing things. "Fake it 'til you make it" is a working principle.

All is illusion and meaning is subjective, so we must examine everything without prejudice

This is a very strange image. Are the child, the dog and the glasses in some way an accurate representation of an event that has occurred or could occur – where the dog has greater intelligence? Or is it an eloquent metaphor that speaks in one dimension of another, offering clues to help us discern meaning?

We humans have the ability of analysis; we can ponder on patterns, relationships and meanings. We are tasked to examine all and everything, without favour, because it is this facility of the human mind which can liberate us from the enslavement of pre-conception. We may eventually come to the accurate realisations that meaning is subjective, a personally-invented device to please that part of the mind that needs to trust in some cosmic order.

We need the structure of the material world to give form to nuances of our inner world. This serves an emotional functionality, because we would lack mental stability if we could not ground our fantasies. Also, in order to penetrate the mysteries of personal identity, we need to give careful enquiry to that very personal aspect of reality that we fantasise about.

The neediness is what creates prejudice. We pre-judge, and project our needs upon the outer world in the form of blind expectancy. This allows us to exclude hard fact, and see nothing but what we expect or hope to see.

The typical conversation between any two people is structured around the certainty that the physical world is the only reality. Yet this is false and many of us know it is – yet we continue to live within the perpetually reaffirmed illusion of its validity.

It is a worthwhile exercise from time to time to stop. Then look around at what we are experiencing. Sometimes the strangeness of life is really quite startling. There is plenty of evidence of the non-ordinariness of our everyday lives, but few are willing to notice.

Human spirit is unimpeachably universal – there are no absolute lines of demarcation between higher or lower life forms or varying stages of competency in each. We cannot assume the child has more awareness than the dog – because, although this is extremely likely, it must be subject to examination.

SAGITTARIUS 22

A CHINESE LAUNDRY

(SECLUSION)

RUDHYAR: A CHINESE LAUNDRY

LOYALTY TO ONE'S OWN WAY OF BEING

Integrity can depend upon our sticking firmly to our principles and manners

It is not always appropriate to blend in and copy others; sometimes it is better to keep ourselves to ourselves and await developments. There are times in life when we need to strong in who we are and resist change and the temptation to adapt, which might actually be a capitulation. The deepening of self-identity has its own merits and importance; it makes us stronger in faith.

Life's true rewards come through poise, inner awareness and self-possession

It is necessary to resist potential inner feelings of inferiority brought on when people disdain our work and worth – as can happen towards those in a Chinese laundry, whose service to the community is actually of real, if hidden importance.

The image hints at those whose path towards self-optimisation requires them to follow a very specialised occupation that might deny them superficial communion with fellows, and even seclusion – a somewhat antisocial lifestyle demanding tremendous concentration for us to focus on important goals.

To master any occupation, it is entirely necessary to guard carefully our inner state and to make a daily practise of inwardness. Whatever is done in the outer world has its origins within – in the inner world of thought and vision. So re-engaging with the inner source of initiative is very wholesome.

In order to sustain the enduring, unrewarded, and even disrespected labour, it takes unremitting dedication and profound faith in ourselves and our work, and a confident trust that out of this work will come a better future for humanity. A great richness of life eventually comes through the pursuit of an objective for which the incentives are remote. Modern society typically rewards those whose achievements and attributes are seen – this is not at all indicative of any emotional or spiritual maturity in the culture.

Because of this, we have to develop exemplary poise. This begins as a necessary facility to maintain a sense of dignity, and yet develops into a masterly attribute – of being able to hold our own even in strange or irksome situations.

Seclusion at work – perhaps at first enforced by an unappreciative social environment – can now be seen as a path towards, and expression of, an unusual depth of inner awareness and self-possession.

By retiring from the busyness of life, we learn to touch the state of soul consciousness, and develop associations with spiritual or angelic forces, whose influence radiates forth. This promotes access to the highest reaches of our inspired creative being, which state is a requirement for the pursuit of the specialist occupation.

SAGITTARIUS 23

IMMIGRANTS ENTERING

(ENTRANCE)

RUDHYAR: GROUP OF IMMIGRANTS FULFIL THE REQUIREMENTS OF ENTRANCE INTO THE NEW COUNTRY

DISCOVERING ESSENCE

Any big change demands of us that we hold firm to the deepest parts of our integrity while adapting to new conditions

During stages of transition we must find a way not only to strengthen the faith we have in essence-self but also to be willing and able to adopt new ways of being, and new perceptions. This applies whether we move home to a new town, change jobs, or join a social group; it most particularly applies when we move to a new level of consciousness. There are new realms to discover and new beliefs and realisations to embrace. These can be very disturbing and rattle the status quo. We must not lose the sense of who we are at core.

With faith, imagination and expectation, we create a new life every day

In his book Music of Life, Hazrat Inayat Khan explains how all the clashing and banging in life is entirely the result of souls being in the wrong place, trying desperately to shift their position until they find peace. Each soul is unique and individual, and has the capacity to express genius if it can find its place in the world. Unless and until this is done then it is existentially restless – so we are never at peace if we are not well positioned.

When an immigrant crosses a frontier they are taking a big risk, and know for certain that they will need to learn a great many things, and train themselves in additional skills in order to find their place. Their entrance into another life is not unlike our own – we enter a new life every day, and each day brings its own different challenges and opportunities. This is a life-attitude of a person of vitality.

Daily life offers opportunities which we must grasp if we are to manoeuvre into better position to experience ourselves at our best. It's a *snakes-and-ladders* kind of game though – we can go down as well as up. The downs are typically evidenced by a diminishment of vitality, absence of creative flair and the presence of impasse. If the heart is not engaged, and enthusiasm is a rare experience, then root-level change is called for.

We yearn to feel the certainty that we are authentic and in the right place, and this sometimes demands radical transformation. When we feel absolutely real and if our work and relationships are all true and deep – only then can we know soul consciousness. Otherwise we must find the courage to move on, or risk stagnation at the level of soul. We have to leave the nest if we want to fly.

To speak of genius is to court ridicule – yet each of us has the potential to create something original out of nothing but thought. Here's the formula: first faith, then imagination, then expectation.

Only the foolish and silly will expect success without ardent application. We must make reality conform to our will – by trial and error experiments. This is often called training, or sometimes knowledge management.

This is the secret that separates out the goats from the sheep. It is so convenient for the sheep to accept life as disappointing, dismissing all the evidence that it is their own inadequacy that led to the poor attempts to create predetermined outcomes. The goats apply themselves properly, and succeed.

SAGITTARIUS 24

A BLUEBIRD STANDING AT THE DOOR OF A HOUSE

(FORTUNE)

RUDHYAR: A BLUEBIRD PERCHED ON THE GATE OF A COTTAGE

PEACE AND HAPPINESS

The formula for life is reliable; getting it right we experience a serene easiness of being

There are rewards for those who manage both to blend into the community and yet still maintain their own style of being. These rewards tend not to be measured by things or money but by nuances of beauty and contentment, that which makes us sing spontaneously as we are pottering around at home.

To become happy, radiate goodwill – we get whatever we merit

Our worthiness is always rewarded – and the rewards are always apt and fair. If we have the good fortune to see a bluebird at the threshold of our place of dwelling, it is because we deserve it. This wisdom is the foundation of all wisdom – we get what we deserve.

More accurately, we are offered it. The portents are given – the signs are always there – but it takes constant alertness and creative aspiration to make the best of what is signalled. A general condition can be observed in the unenlightened, that many people feel they have less than they need, less than they deserve. Yet they stand beneath a tree ripe with fruit looking at the rotten produce fallen to earth too fearful or ignorant to look up and make a claim.

It is our faith in abundance that creates abundance. The immanence of rewarding experience is a constant river that flows into our lives and embraces us, carries us and refreshes us; we just have to harvest it.

The most helpful attitude – by which we not only reap the rewards but also stimulate further abundance – is radiant goodwill. We shine our complete sense of confidence and wellbeing upon all who enter our lives. This is the operation of faith, and it has operating principles. One is the knowledge of resonance; if we vibrate optimism we will attract optimal outcomes. From this comes the Golden Rule, which we can interpret in many ways – 'what goes round comes round', 'love thy neighbor as thyself', or karma for example.

By this attitude we capitalise on every potential and make our lives rich and fulfilling. We behave as though we are rich and we therefore become rich – '*seem happy to become happy'.* Whatever you would choose to receive, then give it first; this applies to love as well as money, goodwill as well as distrust.

This doesn't work so well without a suitable measure of careful attention being offered to matters of serious consequence. Careless *and* carefree is a rare combination of qualities and is rare for a reason – because it is so impractical. The wisdom of this degree is for mature adults not silly children or pleasure seekers.

The danger with the casual approach is that we tend to miss opportunities for dimensional shifts, and can degenerate into bland non-entities. There are times to be carefree and times to be careful. Good fortune is not random chance – those who make careful choices and stick tenaciously to their path tend to attract it.

SAGITTARIUS 25

A CHUBBY BOY ON A HOBBYHORSE

(EMULATION)

RUDHYAR: A CHUBBY BOY ON A HOBBY HORSE

ANTICIPATION OF POTENCY

If we want to be successful and powerful then we need to imagine and expect it first

There is a psychological device that we operate, usually unconsciously, but with practice consciously, that links the make-believe to the real. Often we play at what we want to have come true, as children we do it all the time, envisioning great deeds and possible great achievements, and yet rarely do we anticipate quite how far our potential reach actually is. The power that we have to conquer new realms of possibility lies dormant within us – yet speaks quietly through the playful voice of imagination. The story of our potential future is shown to us in seed form in what we find titillates and fascinates us.

By emulating an achiever we can focus our desire more effectively

The least of us has an irrepressible and powerful motivation to make our stamp on the world, chubby boys included.

We tend to do this by a process of learning skills and finding a place to employ them. Training very often takes the form of play – as the hobbyhorse suggests.

Things of lesser consequence can be raised up with the correct attitude of mind. Our corpulent young hero may well be at the earliest stages in a long career that is capped by his attaining the position of Field Marshall, and winning a battle for his country.

However, the optimisation of life achievement is more about the extent of our improvement rather than the end result. The perfection of our best accomplishment may not be recognised by society at all – what really matters is that we fulfil our desires.

To do this, and realise complete fullness of life, we need to hold our attention in a particularly focused way upon the objects of our desire.

This invariably requires that we learn how to emulate a previous high achiever. Even if we have no role model for this, we can imagine one – as no doubt the tubby boy is doing when he rides into battle on his imaginary warhorse.

The wisdom is about the advantages of using the power of imagination to overcome imperfections in confidence – *fake it til you make it* – and not about making false claims; this must be avoided because it leads to resistance and the powerlessness of inauthenticity.

SAGITTARIUS 26 – 30

CONSCIENCE

In our process of becoming a responsible, creative and positive factor within our social milieu, we have to find a balance between being in alignment with the general population and being a free and genuine authority of our own life message. Society, with its collective ancestral wisdom, rewards with its approval, those of us who blend art with social requirement – the beautiful and the good. As we perfect this skill we become more influential and are tasked to hold positions of central importance, and we are challenged to maintain the poise of holding increasingly strong energies without losing grace and dignity.

Sufis speak of the democracy of the ego and the aristocracy of the soul. In other words, we have to be reasonable and compromising when operating at the level of ego, yet affirm the highest uncompromising level of nobility when expressing on a soul level. In this way, we build a testimony both to our uniqueness of character and our spiritual understandings, in such a way that the soul feels at peace and the ego clear of conscience.

Having awakened the relationship between ego and soul, we seek to master every part of our lives to the greater glory of both. This can be achieved with alert expectancy, primed for either conflict or opportunity – not at all unlike the approach we have when visiting a new philosophical idea, or indeed a new country.

Although prayer and worship are useful tools by which we maintain and develop the soul/ego relationship, they are just tools; they serve a greater function. The point is to bind ourselves back to the whole, to Unity, to all and everything. Of course, we can never truly unravel from it because there is actually nothing else, but we can forget to remember – and that is as isolating as separation would be. Having learned how prayer feels, we then train ourselves to replicate that feeling as often as possible, in fact whenever we remember to. It is thus that we consecrate our lives – by reoccupying a condition of worship even in mundane scenarios.

SAGITTARIUS 26

A FLAG BEARER

(NOBILITY)

RUDHYAR: A FLAG BEARER IN A BATTLE

SELF-SURRENDER TO THE CAUSE

It is possible to devote oneself to an ideal and put aside selfish concerns totally

When a group forms, and as its members become increasingly identified as its members, what occurs is the development of group consciousness. This process includes the definition of the scope of that group and also its essence – the core principle that defines its substance and its goals. These are the essential aspects of the meaning of the group and are epitomised by its name and banner. The flag is the essence-symbol of the group and the person who is awarded and accepts the role as flag bearer takes on both the responsibility of rallying the members, and the consequent risk of being a vulnerable target. In such a position in life it is safer to be humble.

When they resound with the imperatives of history, collective ideals trump personal needs

In battle, the flag bearer carries no gun and is very vulnerable. Yet it is a high honour and requires a deep sense of nobility to raise up the standard that holds aloft the value-essence of those who are loyal to the flag.

This is no empty gesture to win false credit – when properly done, all available resources are pulled together and applied effectively towards a common purpose that expands experience to a new dimension.

Nobility commands. This is the quality that commandeers resources so that the impossible may be achieved, typically in times of emergency or when great deeds are enacted.

At such times, things of enduring significance have to be managed – historical imperatives are at play.

Our personal ideals take on a transcendent dimension only to the extent that they resonate with the collective vision that unfolds as the march of history.

At such times our personal agendas are made subservient in service to the greater good. Common ideals trump personal visions.

This is the image of a level of service so high that it awakens the spiritual dimension in our lives, as we put aside lesser considerations in order to apply ourselves in a self-sacrificing way to support the great cause of the moment.

SAGITTARIUS 27

A SCULPTOR

(IMMORTALISATION)

RUDHYAR: A SCULPTOR AT HIS WORK

MAKING ONE'S MARK

We try to change the circumstances of our life to fit with a personal vision

We are inevitably part of a group, in fact there are numerous groups that shape our identity to some extent, and yet we are also uniquely individual and have an irrefutable inner longing to give material form to what otherwise would remain undisclosed, unveiled and constrained in the realm of personal imagination. Our life is an artwork, our journey is the creative exploration of what we try to convey of our inner experience of being alive. We are all sculptors of a kind.

With mastery, when our vision of self is strong, light can shine through stone

An irrepressible desire to endow transience with permanence – possessing it – somehow brings nature into subjugation. The sculptor immortalises an otherwise fleeting aspect of life, bringing truly exceptional self-expression to bear upon rock-hard reality. In a similar way, we have to make up the worldly expression of who we think we are, so that we have substance within our world.

In order completely to have something, we must share it. That is because one aspect of a thing is its relation to other things, and without that aspect, it is not fully realised and enjoyed. This applies as much to our own self-image as anything else.

What's more, by sharing ourselves with others, we allow them to contribute to our evolutionary shaping process, and so we actually absorb aspects of them into who we are.

We cannot maintain any expanded self-image if we cannot strongly project it – so our vision of self must endure. It needs to withstand the challenges of social involvement and community approval as well as the tests of time. Otherwise it is a mood, an ephemeral idea, a fancy or fantasy.

Maturity of self-development is the furthering of self-manifestation. As we become increasingly aware of who we uniquely are, we want to find ways to give more definite substance to that uniqueness. This is inevitably linked to the creative aspect of self. If not creative, then how unique?

Of course we need to guard against overambitious pretension and the dry pointlessness of callous impersonality. After all, by sculpting personality, we have turned vibrancy to stone; this is hubris.

Let our gift of manifestation be expressed in living works of light therefore. Even in statues of stone, light can shine through. It is the talent, which moulds the statue, that is the real treasure; the sculpting is a process whose highest product is mastery not statues. Mastery lives on and is passed down through the generations indefinitely, not for a mere handful of millennia.

SAGITTARIUS 28

OLD BRIDGE OVER A BEAUTIFUL STREAM

(CONSERVATION)

RUDHYAR: AN OLD BRIDGE OVER A BEAUTIFUL STREAM IS STILL IN CONSTANT USE

MAKING USEFUL THINGS BEAUTIFUL

We consecrate our lives by remembering to marry spiritual qualities with mundane needs

We are creative beings seeking to beautify our lives meaningfully. Were we not capable of transforming our environment, we would be little more than animals of the wilderness constantly in fear for our survival. Yet when taken too far, taming Nature results in ugliness, the desolation of the concrete jungles that big cities become, and environmental poisoning. The resultant inner desolation, depression and frustration that comes out as violent aggression or mindless conformity is evidence of the need to reconcile civilisation with Nature, making what is useful also beautiful.

All ideals and all people fit together to embody an eternal pattern of Nature

Old things, old ways and old ideas can be nothing more than outworn evidence of a total lack of initiative, or an inner lack of vitality or courage. Old isn't necessarily good.

And yet, delightfully, old structures can also speak of the enduring stability of the world at large, hinting at an eternal sense of security and wellbeing that places us in the present moment, yet with firm and ancient worldly roots.

Humanity has built objects of stone and wood that last for generations and have seen the rise and fall of empires, fashions and waves of historical change. We come to depend more for our sense of rightness on what is built by masons than what is built by governments and culture.

Each person can attend to their own requirements by expressing their needs in form and function, and such objects that are thus made tend to last, and take on a special worth within our sense of goodness and beauty.

In turn, Nature has a way of integrating the best of these to enhance her already perfect beauty. Does the chipped, moss-clad, discoloured bridge diminish the scene? It does not; it seems to draw better attention to the loveliness of the stream it spans.

Each person can blend and integrate each other person – as do stream and bridge, which are in natural harmony, each enhancing the other's essential features. All needs and ideals fit together to serve the eternal pattern, though only genius can see this.

What falls away, as ephemeral as dust upon the wind, is what does not serve and take its place usefully into this universal pattern of cosmic alignment.

SAGITTARIUS 29

FAT BOY MOWING THE LAWN

(PARTICIPATION)

RUDHYAR: A FAT BOY MOWING THE LAWN OF HIS HOUSE ON AN ELEGANT SUBURBAN STREET

FITTING IN WITH SOCIAL EXPECTATIONS

Interface with society requires us to conform to its collective sense of respectability

When someone maintains a garden so that it has both natural and cultivated aspects the result pleases the community deeply. A wild garden appears to threaten the status quo being seen as the product of a lazy, slovenly person or a careless rebel. An absolutely manicured garden with no evidence of self-expression is often indicative of cold authority and extreme control. So too with our lives – a little bit of wildness and a lot of disciplined social consciousness is a formula that gains social approval, and actually is often the healthiness strategy since it usually requires us to do physical exercise.

To be involved in community, we must each find a way to attend to another's needs

All of us must participate as individuals within a group context and this inevitably requires us to offer a service that has practical relevance to our community. 'Community' is a concept; in reality we have to find a way to attend to the needs of individuals.

Doing so, we give evidence of a broader competency. Not only can we mow this lawn, we can probably mow other lawns, and perhaps even trim hedges.

The range of our potential contributions is like an artist's palette, and speaks of what we have made familiar over the years through the innumerable choices that express our preferences. We can now see that how we serve is the creative expression of who we are.

If this service is half-hearted, we will not win full acceptance from our fellows. In most cases, doing our very best is enough to earn full approval, with all the benefits that go along with that approval. It is by mastering challenges that we gain respect – the community needs its members to rise up and overcome.

The grinding pressure to conform can mould a person tightly into a pattern that will only ever throw up clones and robots whose projection into the future is dull and perfunctory. The true servant of collective wellbeing will be able to meet this life-denying force and assert a more creative outcome.

In adulthood, the refinement of selfhood thrives on this. Counter-intuitively, the grind is what throws up individuality so much more extravagantly than would a supportive, encouraging environment. The power of social moulding typically tries to disempower primitive appetites and instincts yet can have the exact opposite effect – and the person who can access both the primitive and the social is rare and special.

This is the one who has learned to tame the beast. A calm disposition engenders an effective attitude of service, yet the inner passion that allows unbridled appetite is never far away.

SAGITTARIUS 30

THE POPE

(SANCTITY)

RUDHYAR: THE POPE, BLESSING THE FAITHFUL

LIVING AS A SYMBOL

At high levels of leadership, we lose the right to excessive displays of emotion

Society today is based on the principle that any particular group consciousness is held by an individual representative. For the Roman church it is the Pope, for the USA the President. These are people, and yet they are asked to embody transpersonal ideas and qualities. Sometimes we too are placed in central positions as spokespersons whose task is to speak for the group within which for a while we have found ourselves to be the most influential factor. It is a great challenge.

We raise ourselves up by sanctifying our highest values

The Pope represents the principle that ordinary people can raise themselves up to a place of excellence by acknowledging that certain values, attitudes and qualities have special worth, even to the point of sanctifying them. Each of us reaches the highest dignity of being only to the extent that we have made sacred those of our qualities that we hold up as the best we have to offer.

To some extent we are all tempted by a lust for power and the love of self-display. It is very difficult to resist the egotistical sense that we are more important – or less important – than anyone else, so we can easily be drawn into a distorted sense of self.

We eventually learn that of itself raw ambition is inadequate – except when it meets the exceptional needs of our own personal day-to-day life experiences. Positions of high profile rarely answer all of our personal needs and desires, although the illusion that they will may be a major motivating force to drive us to seek elevated status.

One example of these exceptional needs is the appreciation we receive from our fellows. This actually is a type of energy; it strengthens us, and further boosts our appetite for self-disclosure. Our eagerness for position may well be motivated by a yearning for admiration, and the benefits that that brings.

Thus we find the vigour to climb to a position, inevitably dramatizing our skills and abilities as we do. This supports our essential life-purpose, to experience ourselves as fully as possible in all ways imaginable.

Social and political hierarchies must exist in a civilised grouping, and they are constructed upon a value system, which is raised in importance by rituals and sacredness. That can be religious, it can be cultural, it can be scientific, yet we will always be measured by whether our choices and behaviours are consistent with the predominant establishment.

People are capable of spectacular self-surrender in service to their family, nation and race. Without established value systems, such service will never occur, and the opportunity to experience the high spiritual principle of sacrifice is not sponsored.

CAPRICORN 1 – 5

RESPECT

The height of individuation occurs taking the role of leadership when we ourselves claim central place within our group and make decisions that radically shift the direction of the collective will. It is inherent within the soul to rise to power and make a claim of some sort within some group – even if that is in the family unit as a parent. Those who do this in an expanded capacity without having found a place of love and peace will and must inevitably cause wasteful destruction and antagonism with other groups even to the level of war. Yet aggression is an aspect of furtherment, a requirement of evolving more and deeper experiences. Such power is very dangerous and leads a person towards egotism and self-aggrandisement. Yet even though the leader and many, many others pay an awful price, the group itself grows stronger. So we see that group consciousness does not obey the same laws of conscience as an individual does.

Respect is not seen here as a gentle courtesy that each affords all others equally in a gentle social scenario, it is understood on a deeper level. It is a power, and an aspect of the powerful. The weak and mild will teach that if we want it, and if we want to remain in control of our own situations, then we need to win respect of others; the strong simply demand it. It is wise to protect and defend ourselves, and the least violent use of power is to command respect.

Society teaches and requires mutual respect by implementing codes, rules and laws. Moralists and lawmakers claim their authority from historical precedents, and these codes are the agency through which the better aspects of the community's past are projected into its future. This process – respecting attitudes of the past and challenges of the future – enables various communal imperatives. We can sort out what is important from what is trivial, and we can make plans to optimise opportunity and security. Countries, for example, that do not manage this well are mostly underdeveloped and constantly at risk from aggression.

CAPRICORN 1

AN INDIAN CHIEF DEMANDING RECOGNITION

(INFLEXIBILITY)

RUDHYAR: AN INDIAN CHIEF CLAIMS POWER FROM THE ASSEMBLED TRIBE

CLAIMING POWER

When security is threatened then those who can of authority and take command

A body must have a head; a group must have a leader. Various experiments are still in progress to examine how best to choose the person best suited to that role, how often the leader should be replaced, and the scope of authority granted. In some cases the dominant male makes his claim and decides on his own the extent of power and influence he chooses to command. This usually seems inappropriate in times of peace yet becomes an absolute necessity when the group's survival requires it. This is true on a ship at sea, it is true in wartime. Yet it is always a real question whether the risk of war throws up belligerent leaders or the leader's belligerence is the very reason for the risk.

Authority requires and demands respect – through an uncompromising inner integrity

An Indian chief is a symbol of an ever-effective power of command. It is not a temporary position or subject to popularity and is associated with dignity, and perhaps an inflexibility of character. Sometimes very difficult decisions have to be made which have enormous, even life-threatening, ramifications, and these require a person whose vision follows from a single eye, is consistent and true. Few are able to do this, and such a person can, and does, demand recognition – so to perfect their authority.

This degree shows of an uncompromising inner integrity, and the ability for meeting the situation of the moment fearlessly with the expectation of gaining the high ground.

It requires extreme fidelity to accepted values, so that those who follow have no qualms about the chief serving the highest community purposes.

Anyone working with power and leadership must inevitably develop a steely determination to realise and maintain every advantage gained by birth or through experience. There is no intention here kindly to affirm equality among the general population – power-possessors hold power because they can, and because they decide to do so; what others think of this is secondary, of no great importance.

Every opportunity for self-expression is fully grasped, as a way further to strengthen the grip on the leadership.

However, this should not degenerate into officiousness, and the senseless raising of all minor issues, since this will be correctly interpreted as arrogant egotism and pretentious foolishness.

As a person, this type of leader is happy only when they feel secure in the place they made for themselves. This is because there will always be a challenge to power, and anyone claiming such high profile needs to guard themselves against action from any others who might also claim the position. Hence the need is felt to demand recognition – since this picks up any signs of a revolt that could dangerously undermine their position, and therefore their uncompromised ability to discharge their duty of service through command.

CAPRICORN 2

TWO STAINED-GLASS WINDOWS, ONE DAMAGED BY BOMBARDMENT

(COMMEMORATION)

RUDHYAR: THREE ROSE WINDOWS IN A GOTHIC CHURCH, ONE DAMAGED BY WAR

THE THREAT OF DESTRUCTION

Beauty is one of the first casualties of war

War is a social phenomenon that creates terrible destruction and pain in which both sides lose and precious resources and artworks are wasted. What could possibly justify it as a helpful factor in the evolution of our species? There are those who would suggest that it motivates us to achieve greater and greater mastery of the material plane of existence through technology and management of commerce and land use, which are essential to fund the military. We must however learn that our excessive need and greed for comforts and absolute security is not only wasteful; it is what leads to war.

Commemoration creates our sense of belonging and is a binding force of community

The original artist, who first made a window that was able to evoke feelings of inspiration and beauty, was dramatizing his personal characteristics and sense of life through his handiwork. This subsequently impacted upon appreciative observers.

In the same way, each of us has responsibility to bring to an exalted expression anything we find of high significance in our lives. What happens subsequently – whether seen by just a dozen or a million observers, whether preserved and protected or damaged by bombs – is not relevant in the moment.

In this way an historical record is made – on a personal or a collective level – that commemorates feelings as well as events. This is non-trivial; it is thus that we create our sense of belonging and the all-important binding force of community. If the sense of involvement with our community is to bind us deeply and significantly, as an aspect of its evolving cultural expression, then we must commemorate a real feeling not an idea.

There will always be the threat of damage, through bombardment or other forces of entropy, because superficialities are constantly at risk from the inherent destructiveness of life. So we have to protect and defend that which we value enough to commemorate. One of the windows survived the attack.

Things which are raised up by this special quality of communal attention are those that sponsor pride in the vision we share – typically how we decide to serve humanity.

Yet taken out of the context of our own lives, with current-day needs and aspirations, an overly-loyal commitment to past moments can engender an unhelpful, even fearful, conservatism that leads to dogma and diminished vitality.

Our ideas only take on a real dimension to the extent that we are able to narrow down their meaning to a point of significance in our personal situations. They have to matter to us at a deeply subjective level if they are to have any impact upon others.

CAPRICORN 3

SOUL'S CAPACITY FOR GROWTH

(AVIDITY)

RUDHYAR: A HUMAN SOUL, IN ITS EAGERNESS FOR NEW EXPERIENCES, SEEKS EMBODIMENT

YEARNING FOR REAL EXPERIENCE

Knowledge without experience is theoretical; soul is passionate and wants to know Truth

Another driving force of our race is the will to increase our level of experience and to test ourselves to prove our worth when up against new challenges. In Sufism it is thought that Spirit throws up individual sparks of life, souls, and these are essentially motivated by the first principle of Creation in which the Creator explains, 'I was a hidden treasure and desired to be known'. Souls come to know themselves only through experience; it is their first, last and only imperative, and this is what drives us all to reach further and deeper into life.

Appropriate renunciation is the greatest attribute of personal freedom

In every moment, another new version is created out of life's infinite possibilities. Each version is special in itself, and yet contains all of the components that make up the universe. Whether we identify ourselves with the external, or with internal truth, we have to acknowledge that life – in all of its articulations – is a rich experience.

We can '*seek knowledge unto China'* or we can live out each day in a mundane rhythm, and still eventually get to the point: that life is truly amazing! For those of us who have unlocked the secret, it is life itself – rather than our circumstances – that delights. Each person, each day, each situation and each of our feelings is delightful.

As we change, we grow. And as we grow, we constantly discover new perceptions, which often are surprising and sparkling. Those sparkles of consciousness are as droplets of pure spirit, and they need to be contained and supported lest they scamper away leaving nothing but a wistful sense of barely fulfilled promises. The people around us will be our containers; we look to them for understanding.

Each person in our lives has a particular piece of the whole to reflect to us. We know of our personal evolution most authentically insofar as it is reflected in our involvements. So we see that a period of accelerated growth will require an intensity of interaction, probably not only in depth with one or more individuals, but also in a kaleidoscopic breadth of social intercourse.

Just as a child seeks more and more adventures, we are avid to try out new ways to discover who we are and how we respond to new experiences. This is done in innocence, for the sake of it – as Irish say – '*for the craic!'* There is no need to predict the worth of an experimental outreach or defend its purpose to those who are less carefree. Let them suffer the paralysis of analysis without our complicity.

The danger of such lifestyle lies in its risk of irresponsible abandon. If we degenerate into ill-disciplined self-indulgence, then we can lose the wisdom and be blind to the very mystery that makes such a path meaningful. Detachment and spontaneity can so readily become shiftlessness and reckless incaution.

Nonetheless, appropriate renunciation is the greatest attribute of personal freedom. 'Freedom from' is different from 'freedom to', and some will have a clear insight about which is more wholesome. Joy is optimised with a life strategy promoting a continual reiteration of the need to release any limitation we hold of our sense of self.

CAPRICORN 4

A PARTY ENTERING A LARGE CANOE

(ORDERING)

RUDHYAR: A GROUP OF PEOPLE OUTFITTING A LARGE CANOE AT THE START OF A JOURNEY BY WATER

MAJOR, SIMULTANEOUS, COLLECTIVE CHANGES OF LIFE

Uprooting as a family or tribe demands a very high degree of group consciousness

At times a group needs to change its situation at a radical level. Out of war, climate change or other critical factors, collective migration can become necessary, or at least a major reorientation of attitudes, methods of production or levels of consumption for example. It's happening all the time somewhere on the planet. The rights of individual expression are suspended then, each member of the group has to do their bit and surrender to the will of the collective need for joint concerted action under clear strong and dynamic leadership.

Clear-mindedness and efficiency, good order and effectiveness are leadership qualities

Before embarking on a new enterprise, we make important adjustments of a practical nature in order to prepare appropriately for whatever experiences may come to pass. It's like packing a canoe properly so that the dangers of later instability are minimised.

Care is given to preparations even to the point where our whole attention is on the immediate moment without a thought in mind for the long-term goal. Masons lifting a heavy stone need to focus on the stone, not the edifice of which it will become part.

We trust in the real value of work currently in hand more fully because others are sharing it. This cooperative aspect of a task shared develops self-confidence, because we are acting in keeping with the needs of society.

All is methodical, so effectiveness results. The ordering of practical things is effective in ordering the mind, and from such clarity there arises a capacity to achieve results with minimal waste and disruption.

These qualities are rare and precious and so they attract attention and support from fellows. The tendency is therefore to become involved and influential with others, who are likely to lend a hand in the fulfilment of aims.

In this way we satisfy an inherent desire for recognition for our leadership qualities. The response we receive from society reflects its special approval of these qualities of clear-mindedness and efficiency. It is the anticipation of society's rewards that encourages the commitment needed to achieve results.

Even if it is in response to the needs of the community, this leadership role invariably makes it more difficult to achieve a fully equal social integration. Getting along with others is not always easy, so we watch carefully for any inability or reluctance to form harmonious relationship.

CAPRICORN 5

INDIANS ROWING A CANOE AND DANCING A WAR DANCE

(MOBILISATION)

RUDHYAR: INDIANS ON WARPATH, SOME MEN ROW A FILLED CANOE, OTHERS PERFORM A WAR DANCE

MAIN FORCE

When troubles come assertiveness becomes more important than grace and kindness

Insofar as calamity or war binds a group together, it is to be understood that this fact can be used by ruthless strategists as a tool by which to unite individuals into a much tighter expression of group consciousness. Machiavellian leaders have done so throughout history, and certainly in today's world, in order to strengthen their grip on leadership and further their power of authority. We would be foolishly naïve to deny that this occurs, and it must be prevented if war is to end.

On occasion, taking power is entirely valid

The image suggests that our powers of accomplishment can always be brought to a personal focus to bring about the necessary mobilisation of whatever resources are required to deal with the pressing matter at hand. This must include an effective ability to side-track minor issues for sake of major achievement. However visionary and spiritual we might feel to be, at the primary level of existence, we have to survive the demands of the physical world. There is an overriding need for practical considerations to prevail.

By grappling with hard reality, we come to learn of the underlying pattern of motives taking form within our particular world. After careful appraisal and contemplation, we receive a deep comprehension of what links causes to effects – and we gain advantage by this.

This only works when we have entirely minimised unnecessary moods and tantrums, and have become able to limit the confusing fog of emotionality to times when our survival does not depend upon clear thinking.

When inner ordering proves inadequate for the majority, and the general population is poorly equipped to resolve immediate threats, then taking power is entirely valid. This cannot be reconciled with popularity – and there is no requirement or even possibility to explain our actions. We take command because we can, and because we know we must, even if others are unable to see this.

Aggressive leadership is suggested in the image – the power to get things done. Even when there are plenty of good reasons not to, and perhaps plenty of people who go against us, nevertheless we ourselves can recognise a need to act as a thoroughly immutable necessity for the good of all.

With the power of leadership comes the responsibility for awareness – if we are not sure, then we cannot act, but if we are sure, then we cannot fail to act. This has to be implicit in the very fact of being conscious. We must do what must be done.

At root life is ever primitive, and we are always inclined to allow an irresistible impulse towards rash action that clouds our judgement. The one who does not succumb to such impulsiveness is more suited than others for the role as leader, and has the duty to accept the burdens that accompany the position.

CAPRICORN 6 – 10

PRAGMATISM

It is the mark of a mature adult that what is started is brought to completion and that we understand the importance of beginning new things with this in mind. This behaviour is what establishes a certain quality within, let's call it 'the ability to respond' or responsibility. With this quality fully developed we can respond to a hidden 'rule book for life', which is written in code and occasionally' but rarely and imperfectly' 'spoken' of by certain among us when in a high state of grace. Living within the scope of these rules is like keeping our life-melody within an harmonious scale of notes, and remembering to feel love and beauty as we do so. The highest aspiration we have is to sound our own unique note all the time and in harmony with the One Note – that Buddhists call Aum, and Sufis Hu. When we do this, then all around us fear dissolves and conflict evaporates to become a distant memory.

What some see as pessimism, even cynicism, Capricorn sees as necessity, due diligence, common sense practicality, and pragmatic down-to-earth reasonableness. The true leaders of a community are those who are able to inspire others, to nurture and offer advice, and to guide situations towards helpful conclusions. Mostly, they are professionals – managers, doctors, architects, accountants, and others. They share a particular attitude to their work and their lives – they are trained, cautious, responsible, meticulous, and most of all realistic. Typically they report to a body of governance, and carefully maintain their status as respected notables.

The inner quality that gives rise to such high standards has a definite dignity of being, which requires constant self-discipline and adherence to a code. The characteristics of such people are more conservative than radical, promoting the tried and tested more than new wisdom because the penalties for mistakes are much more impressive than the rewards for innovation; they avoid the stick, rather than chase the carrot.

CAPRICORN 6

DARK ARCHWAY WITH TEN LOGS AT THE BOTTOM

(THOROUGHNESS)

RUDHYAR: TEN LOGS LIE UNDER AN ARCHWAY LEADING TO DARKER WOODS

COMPLETION

We must finish what we start if we want to progress without being called back later

For there to be stability and good order, to have some reliable model for the way things are and how life works, then things need to be built upon other things – not just randomly created with no reference point in the past. Also we must complete one thing before starting another; each cycle has its necessary end. The end is the purpose of a cycle of activity and is its encapsulation in seed form. In our activities it is necessary for us to finish what we start, and only then can we have the realisation that we stand well prepared for something new.

We have all the resources we need to deal with the vagaries of life

The obscure image points to having abundant resources when faced with a mysterious, unknowable future. The archway suggests the passage from here and now to somewhere else; the logs are plenty to build with.

The self is unlimited, so any sense of lack is false – a neurotic misunderstanding; we each have all the resources we need to deal effectively with the varying fortunes of everyday living. In fact, life is an unending exploration of our potentialities, through which we develop a personality that demonstrates our level of realisation.

The temptation to resist new experiences, through fear of the unknown and lack of courage, simply binds us into a rather childlike fascination with mystery and imagination. This is pure fantasy and unhelpful.

If we are to realise our dreams, then we must grasp the nettle, seize the day, and engage with opportunity. It takes courage, and faith – plus the willingness to risk disappointment and temporary setbacks.

Whatever we choose to create and project into the world is an authentic expression of who we really are. In fact, it is because we do this that we can discover who we are. The process is beyond limit, as we are beyond limit.

We have to learn to interpret whatever comes up competently – in other words to our best advantage. This will enable us to develop an unusual degree of effectiveness, thoroughness and persistence in accomplishing our purposes whilst maintaining our integrity.

What arises is a great satisfaction that we are on track and consciously in accord with the sense we have of fulfilling our soul's destiny, and then we meet the unknown future with expectancy rather than anxiety.

CAPRICORN 7

A VEILED PROPHET OF POWER

(SUPREMACY)

RUDHYAR: A VEILED PROPHET SPEAKS, SEIZED BY THE POWER OF A GOD

THE VISIONARY

Some people are gifted to see what is coming and announce it to their group

Whether it is a small family or a world religion, a group that exists has its own identity and purposes, which are above and beyond the individuals that comprise the group. There is a 'group soul' acting as the group consciousness and communicating its perceptions and plans in some symbolic form. This is the 'god' of the group whose face is the collective projection of group members and whose earthly voice is carried by those whose openness, faith and sensitivity enable them to be a medium for its messages.

Few learn to see what is the essential nature of existence; these people succeed

Supremacy occurs when we have something like wealth, knowledge, skills, connections or a position of importance. For example, we find that reading the future has power. The veiled prophet of power is a person who keeps quiet about their inner facility to know what others cannot know about what is to come to pass.

For us to feel a sense of self-fulfilment, we need to achieve something in life. We need to demonstrate our skills and principles, and particularly our ability to overcome challenges. Each personality approaches this very differently because of the myriad differences in experience and background. Yet, in each and every case, there is a vast potential of untapped inner resources to call upon.

We must be careful and learn how to distinguish true values from false. Since this ability is not intuitively obvious, and must be determined mostly by trial and error, there is real danger of unhelpful alignments with inappropriate people and situations.

The strains and turmoil that life throws up are constant and often almost too much to bear, yet we must endeavour to persevere, and in so doing develop mastery. Without challenges, there is no grit to stimulate the need for such a high degree of capability, yet it is a profoundly important quality and well worth the heavy price we have to pay for it.

An exceptional ability arises – the gift of being able to organise effort along any given line of accomplishment. Achievement is no longer a mystery; it is a series of well-understood steps in a given direction of focus, motivated by singular will.

Also, it becomes perfectly clear to us what it is that motivates others around, and indeed the extent of their will to achieve. This veiled insight into the machinery of power has prophetic qualities; we can see, with greater clarity, what must be, and we can see this earlier than most people.

We can learn what the essential nature of existence is. It is that life itself responds fully and adeptly to all of the psychological and physical requirements of anyone, provided they have the passion and insight to expect – truly expect – resolution of their needs and desires.

CAPRICORN 8

BIRDS IN A HOUSE SINGING HAPPILY

(ESTABLISHMENT)

RUDHYAR: IN A SUN-LIT HOME DOMESTICATED BIRDS SING JOYOUSLY

HAPPY ACCEPTANCE OF LIMITATIONS

Life on Earth has limitations and those who accept and enjoy coping with this are happy

The full enjoyment of a happy life is hardly available to people who feel frustrated and thwarted by the strong boundaries that limit personal freedom. It is accessed only by those who have come to terms with the scope of realistic possibility, and willingly accept the conditions of constraint that life on earth implies. Simply because we inhabit physical bodies in a limited plane of existence we must curb our passions and desires; when we do, only when we do, we will be able to know lasting joy.

No matter what, at core we are who we are

The image given of *birds in a house singing happily* leads us to contemplate the simple and beautiful relationship between the higher and lower selves. The descent of spirit or intelligence occurs whether or not we invoke the Presence, and we may only first become aware of it when we notice ourselves singing for no good reason. This is about the actuality and impregnability of independence of every individual.

We have an insatiable urge to put everything to use, and put each of our many talents to work in every part of everyday reality. The employment of our skills and knowledge is the celebration of our being, and there is no limit to the new ways we can find to express yet another authentic aspect of our unique potential.

Eventually, it becomes completely evident who we are, as we make the world our own and call on all others to share it with us. They become not only witnesses to our state of realisation but, in some mysterious way, co-creators of it with us. Hence the Buddhist teaching that we must be careful who we spend time with – because to some significant extent they shape us.

The establishment of our world is the establishment of our selves. Humanity's self-fulfilment is real only to the extent we are successful in shaping circumstances, since outer situations are simply the mirror of our inner world. The realisation of another level of understanding who we are must be followed by a decision to make this realisation manifest in the world, and then taking action upon this decision.

Therefore we need to express an outward vision, since it is that which gives rise to the precipitation of events – they become a revelation of what previously was limited to the world of our imagination. This is what causes us to meet new situations, though which we meet new people who are also projecting their own unique vision.

Idle narcissism is the danger to avoid. It is unhealthy to spend all of our time in self-obsessed activities and inner reflection. A balanced self-image is more likely to lead to fulfilment and happiness. It is our interaction with others that forces us to balance and rebalance our sense of self.

No matter what circumstances we find ourselves in, at core we continue to be exactly who we are, nothing else. This core cannot be disestablished however much we bend to others and are shaped by their impression upon us. This core is very much more precious than the more ephemeral aspects of personality.

CAPRICORN 9

AN ANGEL CARRYING A HARP

(ATTUNEMENT)

RUDHYAR: AN ANGEL CARRYING A HARP

DANCING TO THE RHYTHM OF LIFE

When we can hear the universal sound of life then we are in alignment with everything

To the awakened being it is clear that all life is not other than the expression of a single sound, the 'Word' of Genesis, the 'music of the spheres', the 'rhythm of life'. Unless we tune in to that universal, eternal note we will not hear God's voice. The melody is one of harmony and beauty carried with love as its tone so, in order to tune in, these are the qualities we seek to embody as a way of life.

Worldly success follows spiritual attunement

There is an overall coherence to life and it is like the harmony in music, in which each individual part is essential – and each added strand of resonant melody enhances the whole piece.

An angel carrying a harp has been ever symbolic of Christian heaven – a state of grace wherein all are in constant and cosmic attunement together. In life, when we tune in to this universal blending of energies, we are enabled in all of our activities so that we have no limitations in any situation, and we can therefore avoid frustration, disappointment, and the fear of lack.

Also we adopt a special gift for inspiring others towards their own accomplishments – we do this instinctively, by example alone.

When operating from this place of high attunement, we drive ahead to point of self-fulfilment, unrestricted by doubt or feelings of unworthiness, incompetence or irrelevance.

All of our own and other's human motives are found to be legitimate at some level of comprehension – all of our simple fantasies show that we trust the pre-eminence of desire, which, in consequence, brings us to be able to realise our ultimate dreams of becoming a better, more fulfilled person.

Within us a deepening sense of the spiritual source arises – as it pervades all consciousness – and it is this which actually we are seeking to find attunement with.

Our natural condition is enthusiasm. In the unsullied state of their original inception, all the simple potentialities of experience express true spirit – and this lets us know something of the eternal, unabated glory of just being. It is when we feel thoroughly enthusiastic about what we are doing and being that we know we have reached this exalted state.

CAPRICORN 10

AN ALBATROSS FEEDING FROM THE HAND

(NURTURE)

RUDHYAR: AN ALBATROSS FEEDING FROM THE HAND OF A SAILOR

LIVING IN PEACEFUL HARMONY

If we purify the heart, we radiate love to all beings and trust in serenity and joy

We hear the stories of certain characters whose total absorption into the field of kindness enables them to radiate peace and joy; St. Francis of Assisi comes to mind. With them even wild animals feel trust, and surrender their instinctual fear. Trust begets trust and the world will be free of war when and only when it becomes the prominent mood of our species.

Our right to eat is authorised by our willingness to feed

In literature, the albatross is metaphorically a burden, something that eats from our hand and calls upon us to be cared for.

This image has to do with the basic self-justification – on the practical side of life – that arises within us to the extent that we nurture others who come to depend upon us. It is as though our right to eat is conditional on our willingness to feed.

A person establishes themselves as they expend their own energy and resources – which in turn encourages others to do same – thus creating the dynamic whereby abundance is produced and attracted. We need to give in order to receive. Although there are periods of imbalance in this, eventually there must be, and there will be, the fulfilment of this universal equation. All systems, including humans, obey the cosmic imperative of energy equalisation.

Unusual success, dramatizing our fullest potential and bringing us to complete life-achievement, comes to those who understand and fully embrace this principle: first give away what you most want to get back. This requires determined faith because it seems counter-intuitive, and to run so much against collective teachings of scarcity and the consequent need for self-protection.

To reap abundantly we must sow abundantly.

There is also the pragmatic consideration that if we take the initiative in meeting the various needs of others, then we can reasonably expect them to stir appreciably and similarly on our behalf when the time comes that we are the ones in need of nurture.

Whatever personal longings we have, we are completely dependent on the world at large for their actualisation. We can achieve nothing alone – so we must participate in the fundamental implied formula for community involvement – exchange of nurture.

CAPRICORN 11 – 15

ACCOMPLISHMENT

At this point in humanity's evolution we are witnessing the culmination of our terrible will to power. There is confusion in all areas, ambiguity and misunderstanding – good things done by bad people and bad things done by good people – and lies, so many lies! It takes an unusual level of commitment to dedicate one's life to penetrate the mysteries and discover the higher truth that all is subjective and nothing lasts forever. But some things do have greater worth, they endure and carry the essential message of humanity from distant past and through our children, if we can get it right, to an unimagined, hopeful future.

By whatever personal standards we have set, accomplishment seems good and right – it feels like we have fulfilled an important aspect of our life purpose when we manage to overcome difficulties and enjoy the good fortune of a measure of well-deserved success. Luck actually is not random – it is attracted into the lives of those who work hard to develop skills and fulfil their plans. It isn't simple to handle matters – for most people this world is much more of a challenge than a joyride. Different types of people have different names for the processes by which a thought is made into a thing or an event. Some call it management, some call it magick, and some call it prayer, but the process of each is the same. An attitude of focus, and usually persistence, is important, plus the expectation of reward, the ability to project imagination and knowing how to win cooperation. It is very interesting to read biographies of successful people – in any field of life from politician to comic, sportsman to disciple – the formula for attainment is universal, and it can be taught and learned.

CAPRICORN 11

LARGE GROUP OF PHEASANTS

(ILLIMITABILITY)

RUDHYAR: A LARGE GROUP OF PHEASANT ON A PRIVATE ESTATE

REFINING AND BEAUTIFYING NATURE

By adopting nobility of spirit we can bring grace and harmony to all aspects of our lives

In peacetime when a community's resources are not squandered on war, then art and other cultural expressions become more the focus of attention. Civilisation is the taming of Nature and the cradle of culture. When applied to land and animals we see how a well-kept garden with domesticated peacock or pheasant can come to be an art form of the Aristocracy; often land is beautified and protected by their stewardship.

Following a herd instinct will not lead to self-actualisation

No merit is found obeying a herd instinct and wanting to become no less than the rest – whose plumage, like the pheasants, is in any case somewhat mediocre. It may steer a course towards popularity and influence, but it will not lead to self-actualisation. Neither will much be gained by the repetitious habit of following our own well-trodden paths, as though such empty ritual could replace struggling to learn through new experiences.

One who really wants to find their own version of how reality unfolds will not be able to form an independent perspective if they need approval from society for their actions and opinions. To become freely-expressive unique individuals, we must often shun society's ways and beliefs, which develop through finding the lowest common factor, rather than the highest possible ideal – so how could they ever achieve optimal outcomes?

Illimitability shows that there is no limit to the number of variations on a theme; each apparent re-duplication of an event can be seen as an expression of diversity of potential. Through this process, every possibility of personality can be expressed – towards the goal of maximum self-disclosure, and realisation of ideals.

Our circumstances truthfully illustrate to us the accumulation of our own history of preferences and values, and also create a convenient stage for acting out deeper, hidden issues. The reasons for individual preferences become profoundly clear and we can gain an increasing strength of faith. What we have done in our lives – all of it – led us to where we are, and repeatedly reflect our preferences over a life-time. We have to trust, therefore, that what we have and what we do are important – and singularly our own.

The same is true of our plans and goals. To gain necessary insights required for self-actualisation, then we need to understand why we did what we did, and why we want what we want. These are much more important than anything society does, or requires us to do. All of our personal goals are raised to the highest level of importance, relentlessly pursued with an absolute determination to attain self-awareness in any and all available forms.

However, the trivial pursuits of society are not to be ignored, because they give excellent feedback about our own process – what do we accept, what do we disdain? Every attempt to improve our lives is another reworking of the sense we have of who we are; through this we learn how diversity helps us understand unity.

So we learn to reinterpret social rituals as useful clues to our own inner ambiguities. In fact, the refinement of our own personality requires us to accept such feedback, even if it is presented unconsciously.

CAPRICORN 12

A STUDENT OF NATURE LECTURING

(EXPLANATION)

RUDHYAR: AN ILLUSTRATED LECTURE ON NATURAL SCIENCE REVEALS LITTLE-KNOWN ASPECTS OF LIFE

TECHNOLOGY

We gain knowledge as much by overcoming limitation as through spiritual reflection

Scientific Materialism has been the driving force of modernity and its push to gain knowledge and dominance of all life has been both wonderful and terrible. We have created the Big Bang theory and walked on the Moon; yet also we have built nuclear and biological weapons. The collective Mind of humanity is the consciousness of the planet, and its purpose is to become more and more conscious of what is the structure and dynamic of life on Earth. This is achieved as we come up against new challenges and find a way to exploit natural resources to meet the challenge.

True knowledge is imparted through explanation not persuasion

The way to impart lasting knowledge is through explanation rather than persuasion; this reduces the risk of psychological smugness – an unreasonable pride of intellect that is often found to be present whenever a student becomes a teacher.

There are wide ramifications when we move from being a student to the point where we demonstrate our awareness at the level of teacher – we find ourselves having entirely new experiences, for which we find ourselves ill-equipped. We are often thrown back upon gut-level responses to cope with whatever comes up.

Some try to share meaning through the mind's eye alone, attempting to offer others the vicarious understanding which is brought through on the intellectual side of life. These are lecturers.

Others try to deliver information and exercises by which the student will experience the teaching as a direct fulfilment in consciousness. These are teachers.

The achievement of greater life opportunities, which we may presume is the end-purpose of any teaching, comes only after the full embodiment of any new lesson. Intellect alone cannot provide this.

Self-confidence grows through expansion of knowledge, into areas beyond our previous experience, for which we may have no guidance or role models. Life becomes limitless when an individual discovers that they can master endless facets of understanding through the expansion of reason alone.

Yet without an effective practical application of all their values, these understandings are hollow and lack the depth of feeling required for full satisfaction.

CAPRICORN 13

A FIRE WORSHIPPER

(MAGICK)

RUDHYAR: A FIRE WORSHIPPER MEDITATES ON THE ULTIMATE REALITIES OF EXISTENCE

MYSTICISM

Beyond all concerns of fame and fortune the mystic seeks to know ultimate secrets of life

It is a little-know secret, hidden in plain sight by its own unlikeliness, that life is nothing more than a mirror, each of us experiencing it quite differently in our own unique way. Despite this world of delusion being entirely convincing to most people, the student of esoteric knowledge comes to see through the veil of illusion and discovers the greater truth. It takes more than a gentle heart and clear mind to break through the veil; it also takes a passionate will.

Connection to the Source is the creative power of the universe

Magick is the process by which ideas take physical form. The measure of a magician has to do with the speed and precision of manifestation.

Although available to anyone who chooses to employ it, magick does not routinely appear as a realistic resource for any but the smallest minority. Those who feel its power know it as a perpetual inner fire, which awakens all the more with training, practice, and worship.

They are constantly aware of their intimate and sacred connectedness to the creative power of the universe and its Source. With such familiarity comes skill – a truly extraordinary skill – to enlist every worldly advantage and asset to bring exaltation to ourselves.

With practice, there arises a deep realisation that this divine spark is there to be used daily as a practical tool to deal imaginatively with whatever comes along, and to enact the ready materialisation of all aspects of personal desires and ambitions.

A mystery is revealed – that by continually reaffirming the spiritual qualities of our aspirations, and the dedication of all our possessions and talents to the Spirit of Creativity, then all is accomplished with the mastery and ease that comes from the heart-felt certainty of true faith. Thus worldly ambitions and aspirations are so completely spiritualised that life is a constant prayer, a continual outreach to the Divine. Accordingly, we can define the methodology of magick as faith, mastery and prayer.

It's true that such an approach has dangers – those in particular associated with over-estimation of personal capacity and worth. Conscience is like a red flag that warns us of the impending danger – that we are about to lose our sense of true Self by exalting the ego. Against this risk, there needs to be practised the observance of unimpeachable trust in our certainty of success and worthiness of motive.

Such vigilance can lead towards a surrender of all of our emotional attachments – so that eventually our state of being becomes completely independent of circumstances. We must learn to relax into having no ambition, to allow that success is the end of all wanting – that success lies in bringing to an end all sense of want. When this is achieved, then the ready realisation of personal ideals can be brought to the level of miracle.

CAPRICORN 14

AN ANCIENT BAS-RELIEF CARVED IN GRANITE

(FOUNDATION)

RUDHYAR: ANCIENT BAS-RELIEF CARVED IN GRANITE REMAINS A WITNESS TO A LONG-FORGOTTEN CULTURE

WHAT IS BASIC, STABLE AND TRUE

Certain aspects of life are not subject to the whims and fancies of popularity and fashion

From the perspective of higher consciousness most of what claims the attention of people is of little universal consequence. Love affairs, offspring, wealth and titles all come and go in a somewhat repetitive eternal cycle. Yet some things do not fade, they endure and pass the test of time. We may ask ourselves how much of what we are creating is adding substance to the body of worthwhile, enduring creative output of our generation.

Our creative life-signatures are valid only in relationship to our surroundings

An ancient stone-carver made his mark on the world so profoundly that his bas-relief message re-echoed throughout the generations. There is something in us that seems willing to expend huge amounts of time and energy to stamp our signature onto things that survive longer than we do ourselves.

A bas-relief is placed in reference to the foundation-surface upon which it is constructed – as indeed our creative life-signatures are valid only in relationship to the background reality in which we have our being.

Despite appearances, the general nature of reality is actually fluid and absolutely responsive to our preferences and values – so, in order to create something in granite, it requires us repeatedly to reaffirm and focus our choices, often against profound resistance.

Every instant is another unique representation of all that ever was, is and will be. In every moment we need to recreate who we are with true conviction according to the learnt patterns that we find convenient. Only in this way will our desired results become inevitable.

To accomplish completion of our achievements, we have to capitalise upon all opportunity and make our stamp strong and clear.

We will always encounter others who have different perspectives – and we can learn from these encounters how better to strengthen our own artworks. Beyond that, any imposition of limitations is meaningless – nothing more than evidence of our lack of alignment.

There is a certain degree of consciousness, known to mystics, where it becomes empirically obvious that all personal experience is retried repeatedly – that nothing is new and nothing is old. Life is kaleidoscopic – another, and yet another, reworking of colours and shapes bewitching the observer into thinking themselves to be real and important, instead of simply a point of perspective within an amorphous eternal dance of light.

CAPRICORN 15

MANY TOYS IN CHILDREN'S WARD

(ABUNDANCE)

RUDHYAR: IN A HOSPITAL, THE CHILDREN'S WARD IS FILLED WITH TOYS

CARING IS THE ANTIDOTE FOR TODAY'S DESTRUCTIVE WAYS OF LIVING

Caring is a strongly positive influential energy that radiates from a loving heart

We have a duty of care to our children, the environment and our community. Collectively we have done great damage, for which future generations will suffer severe consequences. Also perhaps personally we have set negative forces in motion or added to the heavy burden of humanity's responsibility for these abuses of natural resources. Each of individually can at least do something to repair the damage, for example by being kind to others, especially children.

Abundance is the mystery of life on Earth

The image reminds us that life includes constraints. It is a normal everyday expression and almost everyone in the developed world will spend time in hospital because of psychological or physical limitations.

Yet there are also ample rewards. Family and, by extension, society provides for us when we are in need of support – and this is understood to be straightforward neighbourliness that we can to some extent expect and depend on.

This genuine kindness, toys for children, is clear evidence of the inescapable richness of life. Even the poor – in fact, especially the poor – will give of their time and resources to soften the burden of one in need. Abundance is the mystery of life on Earth – despite all ideas of scarcity and fear of lack.

To awaken the mind-set that expects and discovers inescapable abundance lifts us to a richer experience of life. Misfortune seems to descend so often upon a person as a travesty of justice – why does a child suffer? And yet the optimistic mind will find the cloud's silver lining. At the very least, a difficult situation carries with it a chance to deepen fellowship.

Knowing this we can create a positive future through the application of a positive attitude. Despite any accidental appearance of challenging circumstances, we can project real potential into life and expect real results.

Self-pity is a degradation of self; it is to be avoided at all costs. Neither does it serve anyone's best interests to offer false sympathy, and support any tendency in another towards childish self-pampering. This will only strengthen negative traits and support pessimism. Taking a person's emotional problems too seriously is not taking them seriously enough.

And let us always remember that our experiences are not a means to an end – they are the end, valid without agenda or amplification through either knock-on effects or understandings. Each and every moment has within itself something precious to appreciate.

CAPRICORN 16 – 20

SELF-EFFACEMENT

A true seeker undertakes many challenges; life is lived completely as an education with lessons and examinations that stretch us to the fullest extent. We must be disciplined to take regular exercise, release our repressed, neurotic emotions and place ourselves in positions of power yet resist the temptation to abuse it. Then we will be hurtled through life experiences one after another at a fast pace that would have been unimaginable earlier in life, still, we learn to cope well with all the changes and uncertainty. We find great solace when we learn to let go of the need to be recognised as important, and we find that true freedom is more deeply discovered in humility rather than prideful self-love.

Learning how to balance Self with Other is the essence of life on both the material and spiritual levels. A sports team is an example that shows how the whole is greater than the sum of parts, and how to identify more with collective endeavour than personal. This same idea is found in nationhood – and promoted with jingoistic phrases, emotional manipulation and raising the flag to a level of sacredness – 'for God and country'. Being a team player is learned very early at school, and, ideally, encouraged as much as individual excellence.

We can lose ourselves, in the sense of surrendering to the moment, when we are rapt in the joy of natural forces, or with complete absorption in a project and, of course, through any experience of in-depth mysticism. Capricorn tackles this important dimension of life mainly through discipline and discipleship, and has an ability to enjoy its capacity for self-effacement – paradoxically even to the level of taking pride in it. Christmas, and therefore crucifixion, is celebrated during this month, though often with overtones of martyrdom and guilt.

CAPRICORN 16

BOYS AND GIRLS IN GYMNASIUM SUITS

(ANIMATION)

RUDHYAR: SCHOOL GROUNDS FILLED WITH BOYS AND GIRLS IN GYMNASIUM SUITS

COMPETITIVE INTERACTION

The grit of competition stirs us to greater achievement

On the surface level this image holds no great mystery, it is simply a reminder that we need to include physical exercise in our lives to remain healthy of mind, body and spirit. Beneath this simple wisdom is a more subtle question – what have we allowed to become so important that we do not readily incline towards proper amounts of exercise? Intellectual pursuits fascinate us, yet emotional stress develops if not frequently released with a good long walk and it is better to get into the habit early in life and try to keep it going right up to the end.

Individuals and society both gain evolutionary benefits from animated mutual interaction

Our experience of ourselves is significantly modified by interaction with the people and circumstances around us. If we look at the example of competitive sports, we see others making their best efforts to rise up through overcoming obstacles – by being totally animated to meet their challenges. So, by observing them, we can learn a lot about how to realise our own greater potential.

When any group of individuals comes together, it amounts to the formation of a kind of society, whose purpose is to rise to common challenges. Typically, we are required to adopt some conventions in order to belong to the group – wearing gym suits for example. Conventionality therefore is a measure of our willingness to abide by social constructs, which we do because we think we will gain personal advantage.

There is always some pressure to conform, and our adherence to terms may feel like a self-betrayal because of the loss of individuality. It is a question of balance: on the one hand is the urge authentically to express and develop our unique selves, and on the other, our need to serve and participate harmoniously in society.

Conformity arising out of fear of authority is ill-founded and false. Self-perception of powerlessness requires us to look again in the depths of our being and awaken the confidence to overcome any pressure that attempts to deny us self-expression.

However, it is completely natural to gain experience and skill under supervision, and any joint projects that favour our required outcome are supported because they help us to develop our general competence in life.

Also natural is a disciplined sense of responsibility, which embraces the ethic of serving oneself in alignment with the common good. The response we receive from our social group is therefore felt to be useful, realistic feedback, whether presented as punishment or reward.

In adapting through this process of socialisation, we learn acceptance and tolerance. This is how our personal ideals are animated, constantly revisited and updated – and reflects society's newly-discovered potential for dramatizing a set of principles higher than previous generations were able to demonstrate.

CAPRICORN 17

A GIRL SURREPTITIOUSLY BATHING IN THE NUDE

(IMMERSION)

RUDHYAR: A REPRESSED WOMAN FINDS A PSYCHOLOGICAL RELEASE IN NUDISM

FREEING ONESELF FROM INHIBITIONS

Much of society's forbidding codes of conduct are unnecessarily prohibitive and unhealthy

Emotional repression has been well and truly embedded in society, institutionalised into religion, morality and law. Quite innocent displays of nakedness are mostly disallowed whereas it is quite wholesome to feel such freedom and release of inhibition. The idea that the body and soul are separate is false – but the implication in such social condemnation is that the body, and its naturalness, is somehow dirty. We are reminded that emotional and sexual repression cannot support self-realisation.

Only by letting go of that which covers us, can we find out what is being covered up

The need for hiding nakedness is not experienced by primitive communities so much; it is the processes of civilisation that moves us away from acknowledging sacredness in the physical body. Any sense we may have to become furtive in life, and hide our eccentricities, shows something of the extent of our renunciation of the natural state, in favour of sophistication.

An alternative strategy is to immerse ourselves totally into a full enjoyment of our physicality, employing the body as a temple in which to celebrate spirit.

This sense of profound joyful physicality generates a feeling of intimacy – with ourselves and with our roots. To remember our primordial aspects touches the heart, and reclaims innocence.

Furthermore, on a purely physical level, we find a sense of self-renewal in the act of becoming naked and vulnerable to the elements – Sun on back, wind in hair, and rain on face.

Beneath all the dressing up and courtesies of social interaction, there is a more basic self – and, if we are to be effective in expressing our fullest potential, this deeper part of who we are must be first accessed and then presented.

The symbolism here takes us beyond the physical to the psychological, is to do with being occasionally stripped back to the essentials and this is more than naked simplicity, more than sacred sex, sport and sensuality, and includes depth awareness of various body clues such as intuition. Only by letting go of that which covers us, can we find out what is being covered up.

Once we have seen a deeper truth, it is likely that we will want to become further renewed by the process of self-sacrifice. Rather like a snake occasionally shedding its old skin, it is life enhancing. This does not have to be traumatic – since we can never surrender anything essential. Only what is outworn or false can ever be lost.

CAPRICORN 18

THE UNION JACK

(SUPERVISION)

RUDHYAR: THE UNION JACK FLAG FLIES FROM A BRITISH WARSHIP

THE POWER OF STATE

We live under an imperial force that has its own political agenda

Political power exists because the majority of people are not yet sufficiently advanced to behave responsibly and with sensitivity to others' needs and wishes. The protection provided by the State is a real and important necessity of civilised communities; and yet such power is a corrupting influence. Very few people are capable of using any power selflessly, and the greater the power, the bigger the risk of falling prey to its dark shadow.

Membership of any group always costs us some freedom of self-expression

Alone we are at the mercy of forces greater than any individual can defend against. The social/political structures that act as an umbrella are there, in part, to protect us.

Weaving the fabric of a national flag is done day-to-day through matters of ordinary commerce and friendly interactions. The exchange of goods, services and attention is a very powerful binding force.

Wealth and power are greatly multiplied when individuals pull together – there are high rewards for common effort, which go well beyond the fundamental expediency of defence against dangers from Nature and politics.

Sadly, there is a tendency for the powerful and wealthy to become bullies, using strong-arm tactics to take what is not freely given. Empires rise and fall, and the background atmosphere of today's living is made threatening because of their aggressive competition. The rewards are so high that the temptation for degenerate behaviour is too much.

Nevertheless the permanent imprint of nationalism and hegemony exists as a modernising and very sought-after reality. Everyone's reach has been expanded, everyone's life touched and mostly softened by its inevitable commercial and technological ramifications.

The price to be paid for being a member of any group is always freedom. To be protected by the Union Jack means that British forces of law supervise our lives.

There is ever the risk of hubris, and it is often true that citisens of the current world masters become smug – whether Roman, English or American. It is food for thought that the enjoyment of this ugly quality has its own price – the smug are never free.

CAPRICORN 19

SMALL CHILD WITH A HUGE SHOPPING BAG

(EXPECTATION)

RUDHYAR: A FIVE-YEAR-OLD CHILD CARRYING A BAG FILLED WITH GROCERIES

PREMATURE RESPONSIBILITY

Heavy burdens accelerate growth yet need to be carefully managed to avoid exhaustion

The rush of life is a relatively recent development, underwritten by the electronic age and the information blast of recent times; it is because humanity is accelerating helter-skelter towards a major shift point in our race's evolution. We are all getting caught up in the spin and often asked, or forced, to take on tasks that seem a little too demanding and for which we feel unready. Yet we must have faith that we are up to the challenge. Nothing can come to us that we have not attracted and for which we have the potential qualities and abilities.

The heart enjoys service for its own sake, so we each have an inherent desire to be helpful

The image is of a child with great expectations, and this indirectly speaks of the wonderful recompense that life offers to one who is innocent enough to respond to the inner sense of being helpful simply as a normal aspect of being a person.

As a person grows in maturity and wisdom, their identity becomes well defined; it becomes less relevant to conform indiscriminately to passing, popular fads, which are essentially self-serving. The spiritual dimension awakens, as does the sense of our ability, duty and privilege to help others.

There is an inherent desire within each of us to offer to our community the fullest reach of our skills and efforts. In fact, unless we do then we cannot develop them, so the desire is actually completely natural.

The responsibility we feel for the welfare of others, even strangers, is evidence of a good heart and a mature personality. There is wisdom in the knowledge that what we do is eventually returned to us, and that we cannot exist at all without the support of our community – so of course we serve. Yet also we need to remember that the heart enjoys service for its own sake.

Considerable personal advantage derives from this approach. The same sensitivity that is used to notice others' needs is employed to notice opportunity. At root, perhaps counter-intuitively, our ready inclination to help others, and our inclination to help ourselves, is in essence the same – because by looking for the opportunity to serve, we constantly realise and keep alive our readiness to seize self-serving opportunity.

Not only does this assist our own development, it also promotes in us the knack of seeing the best in others, and understanding their potentials and opportunities too. Sometimes it takes nothing more than a person seeing a quality or capability in another to awaken it.

As a result of practising a general willingness to help, we become very capable in expanding the breadth of our life experience – and actually we assist our fellows in doing the same thing.

CAPRICORN 20

A HIDDEN CHOIR SINGING

(WORSHIP)

RUDHYAR: A HIDDEN CHOIR IS SINGING DURING A RELIGIOUS SERVICE

SPIRITUAL FELLOWSHIP

Putting ego aside we find greater joy comes from shared celebration of our spirituality

Much of what we call service and think to be altruistic is not truly so, in part it is self-serving because we enjoy it and it adds to our kudos. If however we move into higher consciousness where our attention is entirely upon spiritual realms, and we move entirely out of the public eye, then we can become a humble agency for Spirit. Humility is a blessed experience that is rarely achieved but more easily accessed through surrendering into group consciousness.

Worship enables us to experience the full exaltation of self

The universe of all life is nothing more than a complex series of vibrations – sounds – hidden by our own limits of perception, which join together into a choir to create what is called the music of the spheres. It is intuitively pleasing to see that music is an excellent metaphor for what we know as spirituality, and although we may not be religious and prayerful, we all worship in our own different, often hidden, ways.

Similar to the choir, which is composed of many individual inputs, various different characters in our lives contribute to our fullest sense of who we are. Each one can help us to understand how best we can take the initiative to optimise our situations and expressions of self.

Each separate element of the choir's harmony is itself reordered by participating in the unity of the whole. In the same way we ourselves are modified as, seeking harmony, we make adjustments to accommodate yet another person's influence into our lives. At root, this image is of a symphony of cosmic reconciliations, a statement of harmony as the binding force of the universe.

Each part of the symphony, each one of us, is brought to the point of ultimate individual expression, achieved by having a single unified source of motivation, and a single focus of result. Sufis express this idea as of the diversity within Unity and the unity within Diversity.

This process carries the unique gift for establishing common interest – and it does it with such panache, that both beauty and truth are enhanced. We find that we are able to realise our authentic potential, even to the point of joy, simply by being part of it, and in harmony with it all.

This is no time for personal aloofness and lukewarm loyalties; this is the opportunity to experience the full and passionate exaltation of self as an aspect of the whole.

It is worship: it creates and celebrates the power of good for all by demonstrating how the one serves the many and the many serve the one.

CAPRICORN 21 – 25

FORTITUDE

Our community has a past and a future, which gives it continuity and increasing depth as it pushes through challenges that can reward the winners with recognition and losers with greater wisdom. Also, it supports those of us unable or unwilling to participate in the main thrust of things while we reorient ourselves towards a higher dimension, one which trains us to bring spiritual consciousness to bear upon ordinary things in life. This Earth plane is a plane of abundance whose pleasures and comforts, with a healthy moderation, can be fully enjoyed.

The recognition of personal worth tends to be evaluated by most people in society's terms, with things and awards that are hard to come by – especially by Capricorn, for which it is very important to be seen as fit for purpose; it works with grit and endurance to serve the community conscientiously. Slavish obedience to this principle would diminish joy and self-realisation, yet when carried out with full awareness, can in fact optimise the attainment of personal potential.

To serve a powerful master – and society is exactly that – we have to learn to keep on our toes all the time. While we are behaving as obedient servants, it requires great awareness to hold on to our own agenda and perceptions. Carlos Castaneda speaks of the petty tyrant – and teaches that the truly committed spiritual disciple must learn how to survive within the most starkly oppressive environments. Most mystery teachings have the same idea – we take on very difficult challenges as a voluntary practice in order to put aside fears and to grow in stature. With such a perspective, and consistent fortitude, even apparent defeats are useful as lessons and there is nothing in life that can keep us down.

CAPRICORN 21

A RELAY RACE

(FITNESS)

RUDHYAR: A RELAY RACE

COOPERATION WITHIN A GROUP

An aspect of who we are can only be experienced in a group

An important aspect of social interaction is found when groups compete. At some schools there is a House System – made clear in the Harry Potter films – where children can learn to identify the two principles - of cooperation and competition. A relay race is a metaphor for the passing of responsibility from one generation to another. We each have our time on Earth and, for a while, we struggle to do our best to take what we can from the past and then present a richer, improved version to the future.

Each of us takes responsibility for our own self-mastery

The values taken on by any group are those that facilitate the increase of individual resourcefulness as well as social benefit. What matters to the team members is what makes a person fit to participate in the relay race and do well. This usually has more to do with whether we attend training sessions than whether we attend church or mosque, or vote red or blue.

It is of general benefit that each of us takes responsibility for our own self-mastery. Therefore a person's importance to the community is enhanced by the confidence we feel that, through being part of the team, our own self-preservation is secured. Our feelings of security sponsor our willingness to serve group efforts.

It must be taken as a given that each of us wants to grow – in skills and talents – and that our interactions are angled towards that end.

The urgency of a race points to the intensity of focus that occasionally occurs in every life. At such times we need to pull everything together so that all the components of a situation are held into a functioning wholeness. When push comes to shove, petty differences and envy between people must be put aside so that everyone does their very best to support the demands of the moment.

By such cooperation, a group's best opportunities are brought to culmination. The harvest is brought in, the floods are kept at bay and the village hall is successfully raised.

By such collective enterprises, the individual is also raised up. Social skills are refined no less than practical talents.

Those who selfishly avoid the communal activity one day will find themselves poorly equipped to adequately resource their own needs. The lesson is clear: all for one and one for all.

CAPRICORN 22

A GENERAL ACCEPTING DEFEAT GRACEFULLY

EXPEDIENCY:

RUDHYAR: BY ACCEPTING DEFEAT GRACEFULLY, A GENERAL REVEALS NOBILITY OF CHARACTER

FINDING SUCCESS IN APPARENT DEFEAT

A person of high character can turn every setback into reward or opportunity

It is by no means the case that the greatest worth of an experience is measured by its success; what matters is how we respond on an inner level. If we can find lessons in failure then we have turned the moment to our advantage. Yet if we habituate ourselves to the need to win, then inevitably we will lose grace and wisdom; serene indifference to outcome is the highest attainment. If we want to know true freedom and contentment, then as a life principle we should strive and struggle to overcome right up to the final resolution, and then return to an inner depth of peace and detachment.

Loyal to long range ends, we can transform setbacks with grace of spirit and self-discipline

The general who gracefully accepts an inevitable defeat is an emblem of expediency. Real power comes not from winning everything, but from level-headed practicality made effective through self-discipline and grace of spirit.

This symbol shows of immediate opportunism; a person can develop true genius through learning from experience. The opportunity of any moment is not always clear; it can be success disguised as failure, and hidden to all but the perspicacious.

Sometimes the feelings of a situation are more important than the event itself. If there is grace, people can even be won over by the enemy they have defeated.

This is because grace is a highly regarded value, which facilitates sharing. An individual exalts gracefully in their destiny – win or lose – as they find their roots established in shared values accepted by their fellows as well as themselves.

This is the knack in transforming setbacks into accomplishment – to get the feeling right.

We need to train ourselves always to generate an underlying uncompromising loyalty to long range ends. If we lose a battle, we can come back again – but if we lose sight of why we are battling, then, whatever the outcome, we have already lost.

This is not the same as an irresponsible acceptance of the worst – nor is it a total insensibility to self-inadequacy – it is about doing what works in the moment, and preparing ourselves for the eventual comeback.

CAPRICORN 23

TWO AWARDS FOR BRAVERY IN WAR

(RECOGNITION)

RUDHYAR: A SOLDIER RECEIVING TWO AWARDS FOR BRAVERY IN COMBAT

SOCIETY'S DUTY TOWARDS THE INDIVIDUAL

We may expect all service will be appropriately rewarded in time

Even though an evolved person has no attachment to rewards or fear of penalty, nonetheless it is normal to expect recognition and recompense when we put ourselves to inconvenience and risk in service if the greater good. This is fair, and underpins the principle of justice and right relationship between the community and the individual.

With leadership comes both high reward and onerous duties

Our potential for heroism exists inwardly in advance of its outer expression; it is sometimes felt as a need for us to be recognised for our capacity to show dedicated self-effacing service.

Even though heroic behaviour often stimulates society's need to raise up an individual to the rank of leader, strutting and proclaiming this potential is inelegant and avoided by the wiser person.

Rising above the pack, we are exalted not by our self-proclaiming words and cocky attitude, but by our personal vision and character. Other concerns are subordinated, so that the compelling goal of living actually becomes nothing more than the advancement and presentation of our values, perhaps as teachings to guide others.

Personal growth is stimulated through the time and energy spent in the process of gaining broader experience. This has the effect of gradually widening our social relevance to whatever level equates to our highest spiritual station. Such experiences awaken our ability to dramatise life's possibilities. This calls forth a cornucopia of fruits and riches, which point to the abundance that any can access by following the leader's example of effective, creative, courageous, life management.

Practical social and political gains accumulate. However, we need to remember that an idealistic leader, who may well be completely integrated within normal humdrum society, will still always be measured and also challenged for position. It goes with the job, and helps to keep alive the very skills and wisdom that qualify the leader for the position.

Continual self-dedication is a life path that brings as its reward the burden of social stewardship. With it comes the opportunity to disclose a profound practical understanding of our fellows, their circumstances and challenges.

Recognition, which once was sought after by an immature youth yearning to find self-realisation, is now understood to be a sword that cuts with two edges, the one self-serving, the other social; one cuts away external dross, the other cuts inwardly. And whereas the first award gave intoxicating unlooked-for joy, the second suggests that a third is to be expected in due course. The burden to meet expectations becomes a dimension heavier, the path a degree more serious.

CAPRICORN 24

A WOMAN ENTERING A CONVENT

(CONSECRATION)

RUDHYAR: A WOMAN ENTERING A CONVENT

SOCIETY'S APPROVAL OF SPIRITUAL SEEKERS

Those who choose to pursue a life of devotion to God are supported by the community

Not only does society offer support and reward for the noble participant; it also provides for the person who chooses not to participate in the mainstream. In some cultures, notably India with its sannyasins, the culmination of a life well lived was the absolute freedom from family responsibility and social duties. This insight points to the fact that the community acknowledges and approves of a higher transcendent level of personal attainment.

True life-satisfaction is beyond us until we find something to make sacred

When a person enters any secluded environment it is in order to place firmer limits upon their exposure to sensory stimuli. A convent is designed for such a purpose because the mind often becomes less troubled when in prison cells or prayer cells.

The mind is a complex thing and is so easily distracted that it rarely knows peace. Those who learn meditation and prayer are first and foremost learning to control the restless mind. This enables a different kind of dialogue wherein the self is seen as a third party. We become able to review who we are and what we are doing and thinking.

We find on retreat that life-satisfaction is beyond our reach unless and until we find allegiance with something of greater consequence than our selfish concerns.

We need to be challenged on a fundamental level before we can ever find a cause, a being or a set of values to stir us at the necessary depth. It first seems as though we are so challenged by people and circumstances, yet this is not a deep enough perception. It is we who challenge ourselves; no other assessment has any lasting relevance.

Until we consecrate our lives, we do not have access to sacredness. Passing through the gate of sacredness is how we sanctify all and everything. Before this passage, no matter what we do, we are always somewhat empty. After, we always default to the condition of completeness.

The self is only ever a shadowy echo of All-Self; we are insignificant before God.

Yet what eventually gives us significance – supreme, eternally valid and enduring – is to come to know the transcendental state of being not-separate. When we lose self we find Self. The false self is the mask that covers the Truth that being nothing is being everything.

CAPRICORN 25

AN ORIENTAL-RUG DEALER

(CONSIGNMENT)

RUDHYAR: A STORE FILLED WITH PRECIOUS ORIENTAL RUGS

CONVERGENCE OF TRADITION, SPIRITUALITY AND COMMERCE

Enjoying the comforts of traditional expressions of abundance

Many of our worldly pleasures and comforts are expressions of habitual need and greed, and it is easy to understand why it may be necessary for us to give them up for a while if we are sincere in wanting to free ourselves to pursue a higher dimension in life. And yet with the right attitude of consciousness we may well find joy and heartfelt appreciation for things of beauty that soften the hard discipline that is required for an ardent seeker. An example might be a prayer rug that eases the devotee's comfort yet also in its design keeps alive time-honoured traditions and furthers the grounding of spiritual principles within the culture.

The material expression of our character is the final and undeniable proof of it

A consignment is a delivery of goods, the image of an oriental-rug dealer points to the importation of foreign products, and the teaching here has to do with the effective employment of goods and services of modern society. Whether we think of the Silk Road or on-line purchasing through eBay, the exchange through trade has been – and will always continue to be – a binding force throughout history.

The practical emphasis points to consumer items, yet there is also an implication of accumulation of knowledge, the acquisition of skills and an indication of enduring competency. To engage in trade is to be involved in diplomatic cultural exchange – and it is no small thing.to understand another nation's values and ways.

All human potentialities impact upon commerce. What we believe, what we prefer, what we need, and what we can afford – are all clearly expressed in how we trade. Self-expression is a force that uses all the various advantages of trade as a resource through which to claim more personal territory.

Our obligation to our chosen reality is an irrevocable commitment – and for most of us this is reflected entirely by the consignments we receive. To get an accurate appraisal of a person we can look at what they do with their money. Ideas, opinions, protestations and intentions – are all hot air compared to the facts of the matter, which are someone's inventory of goods and their expenditure summary. Together these speak of the actual facts.

Eternal values are meaningless until they are woven into fabric of humanity's familiar transactions. What actually matters is what is made material; the material expression of our character is the final and undeniable proof of it. So we must spend according to our philosophical beliefs.

For example, if an individual wants to offer a real service to fellows, to be kind and thoughtful, and to make a real difference easing the burden of the downtrodden, these sentiments must take the form of bread not words.

Society has too much concern over trivialities – people will ignore a hungry street beggar as they walk past carrying a heavy bag full of cat food. When we prioritise our purchases to align with our values, we spend as an aspect of our principles. This simple act eventually influences the production choices of distant manufacturers, and therefore could help to moderate their shameful use of slave labour and irreplaceable raw materials.

CAPRICORN 26 – 30

MASTERY

We seek, and seek further, we read the signs and the explanations, we struggle to overcome worldly challenges and learn how to hear the multiplicity of inner voices, and see the beautiful interconnectedness, the patterns of energy. Eventually we find what we have been looking for – we must, simply because our attention has not wavered. We come to know that the field of reality in which all unfolds is managed by two opposing forces of dark and light and on one level, the human level, these forces are populated by realised beings on each side of the equation.

Any strategic life course aims to optimise potential and make real whatever is imagined; a path of mastery is one that achieves this goal. There are established policies and techniques for this, together with a complex range of essential individual qualities. Generally a dissatisfied, restless disposition is more likely to keep one moving up to a place of high repute and influence. The master can convince people that what suits them personally also suits the community very well; so can ascend to a position of leadership rather easily.

The fabric of society is woven by policymakers – functionaries who legislate in order to motivate group endeavour towards communal purposes; it is best if these are the ones who best demonstrate working within the rules. So, to win public support, a leader needs to be the perfect example of good order and obedience, while at the same time being free-thinking and independent.

Since uncertainty breeds instability and wasted resources, it is more reliable to create a future very similar to the past; yet progression and innovation is inevitable. It is tremendously exacting to navigate a successful path between new uncertainty and old reliability, between humility and pride, and between service and command. More than any other sign, Capricorn does this well.

CAPRICORN 26

A WATER SPRITE

(RESTLESSNESS)

RUDHYAR: A NATURE SPIRIT DANCING IN THE IRIDESCENT MIST OF A WATERFALL

DANCING TO THE RHYTHM OF LIFE

We can tune in to the subtle and so find ourselves to be just one part of the Great Mystery

Water links all things on Earth as it moves through its cycle of change, from ocean to cloud to rain to river - eternally. In a way our feelings do that too, as love of God, ups and downs of emotions, and love of life and all beings. What we study as occultists includes this essential life rhythm and most importantly the awareness that all things are metaphors for all other things. There is but one thing going on and we are all part of it, sounding its note and dancing its feeling-dance, all connected by sharing the Source of inspiration for our own dance.

Free spirits are masters of their own experience

This is a symbol of restlessness, that points to exceptional, usually intuitive, sensitiveness to overall implications of where a course of events is leading. There is implied a high skill in avoiding drab, commonplace involvements or tedious situations of any kind. People strong in this quality are very often referred to as 'free spirits'.

In a free-minded person, the pure integrity of self asserts itself – as a protection against blind or inept participation in any existing progression of affairs that does not properly reflect their authentic expression of character. The free spirit has a knee-jerk reflex to reject any project or situation that repudiates full and free, spur-of-the-moment expression of the urge to live.

Instead they will often be seen as a rebel – troublesome, eccentric and someone to be suspicious of. Such people demand every possible experience of richness in their outer reality; they develop a highly personalised form of approach to life, and free themselves from any possibility of becoming seen as a possession.

Yet when this is in completely accord with the inner spiritual aspect, then it is nothing less than pure mastery of experience. And the master exudes a type of charisma, which influences all around them to allow this uncorrupted freedom of being to express itself without imposition.

It calls for conscious self-idealisation in even the most unimportant and transient life functions. We will then always do what feels right, in innocence and without self-consciousness. Special moments can never be identified in advance; they arise suddenly when a life process is being triggered to another level. Such moments occur without warning so we must constantly be aware of their potential to occur. This gives willingness to respond, and is a measure of our magick, mirrored in the frequency, number and power of our special moments.

These personality types tend towards a carefree irresponsibility, and a dislike of lasting intimacies. We need to develop serenity in order to avert the damaging effects of loneliness, sadness, disdain and despair. As serenity deepens we become able to deal with bigger challenges without loss of peacefulness.

It almost goes without saying that spontaneity is a wholly necessary quality. To express our values and preferences immediately, with commitment, and against the flow of the more programmed behaviour of normal people, then we need to maintain an impressive constancy of vitality.

CAPRICORN 27

A MOUNTAIN PILGRIMAGE

(PERSEVERANCE)

RUDHYAR: PILGRIMS CLIMBING THE STEEP STEPS LEADING TO A MOUNTAIN SHRINE

THE PILGRIM'S JOURNEY

Seekers must for a time move away from their busy lives to struggle to seek peace

Even though we love the dance of life, the sensuality of touch, the thrill of engagement and the risk of dangerous conflict, we also love the music that makes us dance. For the pilgrim, that love is the stronger force for a while, and causes them to walk away from the busy marketplace to find a mountaintop somewhere so they can have a fuller experience of the Great Musician.

The seeker of ultimate realisation must hold to the path with resolute steadfastness

At some point in life, we need to discover whether we are parading false virtue, by only pretending to the sacred condition of a would-be pilgrim, or whether we really do have sufficient perseverance, to overcome all the temptations and challenges, which are inherent in any spiritual path of self-discovery and improvement.

Often, the mountain is used to symbolise the pyramiding reality brought about by the inner realisation that occurs when we find complete harmony between our life-style expression and our chosen ideals and values.

This is not about gaining satisfaction through superficial allegiances to a particular track of spiritual practices or religiosity; it is about climbing higher and ever higher, towards a place of ultimate realisation.

The indomitable integrity of human comprehension can only be truly awakened by a challenging process of struggle and surrender. We will be examined and have to choose either to overcome both inner and outer resistance, or to become more flexible. Usually we will need to strengthen our resolve and buckle down.

An unquestioned devotion to the worthwhile task at hand is emblematic of the true disciple. The seeker is encouraged, by the path itself, to hold unswervingly to the self-chosen course.

Every vision that our intelligence can aspire to is intensified. Although we will always need to respond appropriately to each difficulty we come across *en route,* with this level of focus, and our certainty of the sacredness of our purpose, we can expect success in all of our endeavours.

Then mind and heart will experience a total reconciliation one with the other, and gentle outer circumstances will inevitably reflect this sublimely peaceful inner condition.

CAPRICORN 28

A LARGE AVIARY

(COMMUNITY)

RUDHYAR: A LARGE AVIARY

AWARENESS OF SPIRITUAL MESSAGES

We need to train ourselves to find intuitive clues and signs by expecting them

For the seeker life can have a very simple directedness – overcoming struggles repeatedly and enduringly until we reach the goal, realisation. It seems unattainable and almost fanciful that we could ever actually reach the mountaintop. Yet the day comes when we do – it is inevitable if we stick at it long enough – and then the peak experience that we first had on reaching the top is replicated over and over. The peak becomes a plateau and somehow we lose the thrill of attainment; yet we find ourselves flooded with many realisations, the inner voices of Spirit. We have learned to hear clearly.

Management is its own fulfilment if we make common welfare our personal concern

A large aviary symbolises our own community, since birds have behaviours that humans also have as they unconsciously interact to form a social group.

This image points to someone who has exceptional success in making all their personal concerns a matter of common welfare. Generally, in many areas of normal life, we cannot help but notice significant differentiations of interest between ourselves and others, and yet when we consider the full ramifications of what we do, we see that everything influences everything else in the community, so our apparently self-centred interests actually serve the greater good.

The gift for bringing any one special and personal line of effort to the immediate services of any other lies in the understanding that, in fact, it cannot actually do otherwise. A light touch is therefore the best approach since heavy-handedness is not only inelegant, it will probably create worse outcomes.

Everyday problems have their solution in our breadth of resources – we need the shoe repairer, who needs the car mechanic, who needs our childcare service…and it goes around and around without end.

A wide-spread range of personal aspirations is thus encompassed in the over-all realisation by which we have organised ourselves. Of course this is not a co-incidence; it developed this way because we need it to be this way.

On this social level, the administration of human potentialities has its own self-fulfilment. As we commune together, we naturally find that what one wants to give the other wants to receive, and so very little manipulation needs to occur.

This facility is lost when the economic unit has no personal community – as was true in the former Soviet republics, where obscene surpluses and shortages were the norm. There is a loss of all character through sheer officiousness when a bustling local market is replaced by a political system contrived for controlling life's basic needs.

CAPRICORN 29

WOMAN READING TEA LEAVES

(SIGNATURE)

RUDHYAR: A WOMAN READING TEA LEAVES

INTERPRETATION OF SPIRITUAL MESSAGES

We may see the signs and yet we need also to know what they mean

As above so below, all is connected to, and mirrored by, all else. It becomes trite to the occultist as a concept but to the realised being it is their main purpose – to see beneath form, facts, feelings and fear. These are all aspects of the glamour that we falsely see as reality and which covers the truth beneath. And that truth is the pattern that interconnects everything everywhere and always. We find the term seeker needs to be updated to troubadour – "I have found". We have learned how to see clearly.

To balance seen and unseen worlds, inner feelings have to be tested in outer experience

Generally, the mind's focus orients towards those things that are universal and eternal. Despite the scattered thoughts, habitual processes and fascination with trivia, eventually its curiosity points the attention towards the unseen worlds.

In their quest for access to the Eternal, some people are seduced by superstition, and are drawn into a distorted understanding of the reliability and importance of symbols and voices from beyond. They go to Madame Sybil's seafront parlour for a bit of fun, and get caught up in the idea of a fated future.

We do accept that our naive insights can have real and unusual merit – and that our feelings are informative. Yet the values we adopt when we project our life-signature are not likely to be profound or even sustainable unless we balance intuition with analytical intelligence.

If we are to find a workable balance between the seen and unseen worlds, then our inner feelings have to be tested in the realm of outer experience. So it is certainly appropriate to consult another about other realities, but not to accept their words unconditionally. We must challenge all input to the extremely impressionable mind, otherwise we become as puppets, and find ourselves with neither power nor integrity. We lose dignity and influence if we do not confront what we cannot validate.

Our lives demonstrate the interaction between how we project our values and understandings, and how we respond inwardly to the echo we get from others receiving these projections from us.

We attempt to make the facts fit the expectation. This is normal, and even sometimes productive – and yet often our model of reality is simply wrong; it doesn't fit the facts, and can be entirely unworkable.

To realise our fullest potential, our best strategy is to examine, with discriminating intelligence, the facts of the matter, and then allow our inner sense of self to influence our final understandings. Input from others is to be fully assimilated only to the extent that sits well with us. We need not entirely reject what is yet unproven – yet it is better to hold an unconfirmed idea in abeyance, pending further investigation, until it is validated. In the end, it is our interpretation of facts and feelings that is our true signature, by which we identify ourselves uniquely.

CAPRICORN 30

A SECRET BUSINESS CONFERENCE

(OPPORTUNITY)

RUDHYAR: A SECRET MEETING OF MEN RESPONSIBLE FOR EXECUTIVE DECISIONS IN WORLD AFFAIRS

HIGHEST LEVEL OF SOCIAL INFLUENCE

Society is hierarchical; small groups of people secretly direct the course of history

In the kingdom of the blind, the one-eyed man is king. Great power comes when we can see what others do not see. We can grasp opportunity, avoid calamity and inconvenience, influence people and make sound decisions for ourselves. A group of highly awakened individuals together form the ruling executive power over world affairs notwithstanding the rise and fall of political fashions, nations and economic blocs. These can see what the masses do not see. Two sides must exist of this phenomenon; the dark aspect is revealed as a satanic elite that selfish controls the wealth and laws of the world. There is also a hierarchy of light beings, equally powerful, yet focussed on keeping open the path to freedom and complete realisation. We need to choose which group to offer our attention.

The life lesson is to seize opportunity

The corporate imagery of a secret business conference speaks of cautious, carefully-considered management. The physical world is hard to handle, yet there are particular skills and practices that enable us to meet the challenges that arise as we attempt to initiate and lead change. Diligent planning is necessary; so is strategy.

In the journey to develop awareness, an important step forward is when we truly realise the causal relationship between our attitudes, activities, and the circumstances we encounter. In other words, we make it all up.

If we have any genuine determination to make the best of every situation, then we will learn how to form allegiances with the prime movers and principal characters in any scenario. After all, each of them is an actor in the drama we ourselves are scripting. There is always an inner circle – and our desire to establish, maintain and evolve these connections is of strategic consequence. We can see the members of this group as having very special relevance for us in order to foster and express our values and preferences.

The extent to which we are able to control our situations largely depends upon the nature of the relationship with the individuals that comprise our inner circle. There is a need for a deep level of rapport, and also, through appropriate gentle confrontations, the ability to establish a high degree of authenticity.

The road to true success is narrow and long. It is not enough to achieve goals – these are contributors to success, not success itself. To maintain joy and integrity is the greater achievement, especially as the honours mount up.

The test is whether we can balance our own desires, dreams and needs with others' – and resist the temptation towards selfish exploitation of all and sundry, friends included.

The abundant resources around us – both claimed and unclaimed – are available when we have learned how to attract them. The life lesson is to seize opportunity – and yet to expand our perception of the depth and value of what good fortune actually is, to include only that which is of valid and lasting significance to us.

AQUARIUS 1 – 5

IDEALISATION

What is built of clay and even stone will one day be destroyed and rendered to dust. Nature's power to create is matched equally by its power to destroy and civilisation's attempts to tame Nature are, in the end, futile. Yet the inner strength and subtlety to go against the flow of wrong-mindedness, and to find a place to be in harmony with life, can be bound into perpetuity as the qualities of our race and the eternal, indestructible essence of the species-nature, our humanity.

To make things and situations ideal, we have first to examine what has happened before, and compare this to what could happen, and also to our idealisation of excellence. There is a power of integrity written in things that were once new, many years ago, and have survived and evolved to a place whereby they give testimony to their enduring worth. Age has improved them in ways that only ageing can – by adding depth of character and proving their strength against the eroding forces of tide and time. It is not for us to throw out the old just because it is not modern. Yet it is for us to throw out whatever cannot find a place of relevance within the current zeitgeist since our loyalties are not best given to outworn causes, people or ways just for sentimental reasons. It is for us to hear the roll of thunder as a presage of change, to feel its capacity to transform and to be ready to move things to the next level, energised by our best ideas about what might be possible.

AQUARIUS 1

AN OLD ADOBE MISSION

(DURABILITY)

RUDHYAR: AN OLD ADOBE MISSION IN CALIFORNIA

LASTING VALUES

We build lasting forms for what we want to outlive us

Major works require group endeavour, thus we know that they are emblematic of their times. Thousands of years ago, Stone Age man created features that were very difficult to make – Stonehenge for example – that were clearly used for worship and ceremony, and they show that that aspect of life was very important indeed to them. Adobe missions similarly took great effort to place in the wild territory of California's early period, and collectively they took on the dual function of survival and worship. We might ask of ourselves, 'Does our own set of values motivate us powerfully enough to create something sufficiently lasting that it outlives us?'

Standing up for our lifestyle deepens character and inspires in us a faith that we belong

A mission a robust answer to the problems of survival and making a living – required because we live within a testing environment. What helps to ensure our physical survival as a species is the durability of what protects us as individuals – and, to offer such shelter, these missions were constructed to be strong and permanent. They were more than resources to support settlers materially; the spiritual side was also central to their purpose.

There is continuity between our material needs and the depth of our psychological needs; because we are at risk physically, we are vulnerable emotionally. As we invest our loyalties into a way of coping with the physicality of life, we inevitably align with shared emotional realities too – such as having faith that we belong.

How and where we build home and place of worship speaks about our loyalties, preferences, history and expectations – also it determines a great deal of what we become. The heritage of our enduring ties is a reminder of what has value to us, which must not be neglected or underrated if we are to realise our individual potential.

A compelling depth of character arises from the respect we assign to our heritage. It is almost inevitable that we will, at some point, be called upon to defend and protect what we think of as home, family and community. If we have nowhere to stand, then we cannot really stand for anything.

This deeper approach to life's established values actually also gives rise to an effective breadth of vision. The future needs to unfold within particular parameters in order to keep alive the tradition we have adopted, and which has adopted us. Our choices about direction are made with reference to the past since we understand that a rich and deep history can underpin a rich and deep future.

One thing we need to be careful of is that such a complete observance of old ways can easily lead to a total lack of ambition, and also a blind adherence to superficialities that have been crystalised into community values. This can be avoided if we are always aware of who we are, what we are doing, and why.

An aware person is tested to remember their own true spiritual state at all times; this is a necessity for both an overall orientation and an underlying stability in all personal existence. In a world of deceit and illusion, where nothing is ever completely fixed in time, this presents a prodigious challenge.

AQUARIUS 2

AN UNEXPECTED THUNDERSTORM

(ACCIDENT)

RUDHYAR: AN UNEXPECTED THUNDERSTORM

ALL LIFE IS EPHEMERAL

Though we want to cement our lives into secure structures, Nature always wins in the end

Nature is a constant existential challenge to the works of people; fires, floods and winds tear down our strongest buildings in moments, and time itself erodes everything eventually. By this fact we are reminded not only how small and insignificant we are and how magnificent is any creation that stands against Nature for a while, yet also we remember the need to develop inwardly the strength to cope with it all.

With optimism and confidence, setbacks will always further our ends

Civilisation has developed to protect us against the cruelty of Nature, yet in the end we all have to take precautions against accidents, and quicken ourselves in the presence of such primitive forces as thunderstorms. The storm image is appropriate on the psychological level too, as society also tries to mitigate emotional pain and inconvenience as much as possible.

Nonetheless, it is more or less certain that we will be thoroughly inconvenienced in our lifetime by the shifting patterns of events in which we are obliged to participate. The appropriate attitude is one of alertness rather than complete temperamental instability. It is idiocy to shout threats at the thunder.

In all the strands of a normal life – career, relationship, spirituality and family – we will likely have to come to terms with the loss of love, of position, of health and of our hopes – often as a result of an unexpected, unwelcome, forceful or stormy event.

It is better to recognise the positive aspect of crisis. Without it, opportunities for maximum self-development are rare, and the bonding convergence of relationships is absent. Life needs crisis to deepen.

The masterly approach is to seek out such events and 'chase the storms', so to harvest the juice they contain. With the right mind of optimism and confidence, we can call up our genius to create opportunity out of disaster, and use setbacks, and even catastrophe, to further our ends.

Accidents by their very nature are unexpected – but only as to their timing and particularities. They are entirely predictable as to their inevitability. So we can prepare for them, train ourselves in how to respond to them – and take full responsibility for their implications in our lives. Nature's potentialities lie beyond our jurisdiction – so we must develop strategies for how to act when we are not in control.

At an advanced level of understanding, we see that all control is illusion anyway. Everything we plan is subject to modification, and the final mystery of life is accessed only through surrender. Thunderstorms, by their very unpredictability and awesome power, help us find our way towards this subtle, counter-intuitive comprehension.

AQUARIUS 3

A DESERTER FROM THE NAVY

(DEFIANCE)

RUDHYAR: A DESERTER FROM THE NAVY

REFUSAL TO ACCEPT THE UNACCEPTABLE

Certain of society's constraints are inappropriate for us and we must not comply

Whatever can endure on the inner planes withstands all that comes. This ability to face life head-on, and meet all things without buckling under, is earned not gifted. It inevitably requires that the individual must go against society and its norms and rules in order to find their own unique true path.

Unless we create our own loyalties, the future appears shallow and pointless

This is a statement of human independence carried to a point of extreme rebellion against things as they are, whenever our life circumstances are simply unacceptable. Where tyranny rules, then defiance is the action of a hero, which requires the psychological condition known as *death or glory*.

For the sake of an immediate liberation of the spirit, we will disregard of all the consequences of authority's displeasure and social disapproval. Freedom is a primary quality, and equates to the life-force; it is the enactment of Spirit, and will not be held in place for long.

The soul's demand for a fully rewarding expression of individuality cannot be ignored without serious personal consequences. Anything we are forced to do that betrays the soul will attract unpleasantness and eventually suffering.

It takes genuine psychological courage to bring about an appropriate repudiation of all meaningless loyalties. This usually calls upon a combination of very clear thinking and certainty of purpose, together with strong resolve and willingness to make sacrifices.

And yet it is an imperative because, except as we create our own allegiances, destiny holds no depth of meaning, is shallow and feels pointless. We can thus infer the central importance of 'daring to defy', since its absence guarantees such mediocrity.

It is made clear that any late acceptance of full and personal responsibility for life is better than none at all. Perhaps we should not have signed up in the first place, but better a late correction than no correction. We began life as children powerless to protest against injustice, which excuses our earlier inability to act – but as adults that is no longer the case, and we must now act. That said, a deserter from the navy could also indicate a person whose complete inability, to follow the rules of the game, is neurotic and indicative of immaturity.

So hero or villain then? It is in the end for us to decide for ourselves.

AQUARIUS 4

A HINDU HEALER

THERAPY:

RUDHYAR: A HINDU YOGI DEMONSTRATES HIS HEALING POWERS

SPIRITUAL FOCUS

Pleasures and disciplines of civilisation rob us of our precious ability to find spirituality

Long ago our species lost its balance and set up a pattern of distortion in thinking and behaviour that has prevented us from finding the highest degree of group consciousness. That has brought emotional and physical disorder to most people across the planet. Yet certain people have kept alive practices from ancient times and are able, and in fact duty bound, to offer healing to those ready to receive it.

When we practise our magical capacities in service, spectacular results are possible

This is a symbol of the development of self to a very high level so that, by appropriately asserting our participation at the correct point, we make a particularly effective and beautiful impression upon the world.

A Hindu healer is typically hugely dedicated to the perfection, not only of their skills and knowledge, but also their personal disciplines of spiritual practice. Generally speaking, intense personal self-discipline creates the power to shift realities. Through this, they achieve a magical ordering of a whole course of events, which follow their involvement during a transitional phase of any occurrence. We can do this too.

All of our understandings and talents are essentially eternal and cosmic in their reach and significance. They can be brought to tangible achievements here and now in the world of forms by dramatizing them – in other words acting as though they were here present – and expecting results.

When we practise such magical capacities in service of others, a therapeutic relationship is struck where spectacular results are possible. Those we encounter are healed in mind and body, and at such times, there is a marriage being consummated. It is the ultimate union – that between the ideal and the real, spirit and matter, heaven and earth.

It takes exemplary personal skill to find the highest potentials within ourselves so that we can see the highest in another. By so doing, we bring potentials to their supreme completion, simply because they are recognised.

It goes without saying that the power to practise magic and healing is forfeited should a person employ their psychological insights and high spiritual station to impress, or intrude upon the free will of another.

Essentially, despite the pleasing resonance in the world of forms, this is a transcendental mystery. The path of healing is best walked by one with no attachment to outcomes. Both the healer and the client are better served by this humbler approach.

AQUARIUS 5

A COUNCIL OF ANCESTORS

(ANTECEDENCE)

RUDHYAR: A COUNCIL OF ANCESTORS IS SEEN IMPLEMENTING THE EFFORTS OF A YOUNG LEADER

BUILDING UPON WHAT WENT BEFORE

Despite personal pride in our achievements we are no more than the next in a long line

The interaction between the group and the individual is exemplified when the group supports the visionary initiative of a leader, who in turn is dependent upon the power available when tapping in to old cultural stories. Whatever endures becomes stronger and can add its strength to empower contemporary creative initiatives.

Being true to our values is only possible when we have values to be true to

As individuals, we are sponsored by our relationship to the ruling body that keeps alive old traditions of our culture and heritage. A council of ancestors symbolises the principle of antecedence – what has gone before us is the fundamental aspect of who we are; it is the fundament upon which we build our personal identity.

The whole of our background mobilises itself continually to serve us and to facilitate a further refinement of potentialities in the modern era.

The cultural characteristics which have proved their value, and hence have their continual re-embodiment in the hearts and minds of one generation after another, create an immortal dependence within each individual born. We simply could not be what we are without what our ancestors were.

The self ultimately must fulfil itself, and will be a challenge to society. Yet the ability to establish our uniqueness of being requires the strength of clear and solid roots, which we inherit socially from those who went before.

It is good to remember this – and appreciate that the path we walk is well trod. Whilst avoiding sterile conservatism, it is highly beneficial to show some deference to the track-makers. They were pioneers, not settlers, and they found ways to innovate and discover many of the aspects of our treasured lives that we now need, and could not imagine doing without. This is as much to do with ideas as things.

The enduring reality which anyone creates in the overall ideal we accept for ourselves. These ideals define us more than possessions do and they have evolved over a great deal of time.

The mystery of this degree is how to develop power through absolute self-integrity. Authenticity and dependability are truly respected qualities that win the trust and support of our fellows – which brings influence and responsibility. Yet being true to our values is only possible when we have values to be true to.

This naive state is by no means easy to access, simply because it is absolutely fearless. Any imperfect attempt can easily lead to an unhealthy reliance upon external forces for a sense of both stability and achievement, rather than a self-assertive, self-fulfilled state of being.

AQUARIUS 6 – 10

FAITH

In order to contribute to humanity's best hopes for evolutionary development we must first be able to reach higher states of awareness of the collective thrust of our species. Yet also we must trust that our own, personal creative inspiration is valid, and in fact we need to find a process of modelling our vision so that it becomes clear and compelling, and then we must act upon it. Constantly revisiting and reviewing our essence-nature will help us to guard against the loss of identity into collective ideals.

Our faith in life is rooted in our faith in death – and the understanding that nothing is beyond the reach of cosmic order, that everything living dies away as soon as it has surrendered its vitality and purpose. Without this constant process of renewal, there is no rejuvenating agency; morbidity results. Faith helps us relate to death and, when we have come to terms with death, the freedom within life takes on a deeper dimension. Each moment dies, and each next moment is reborn with the fullest potential, as fresh and unsullied as dawn. Trust in this enables a very powerful creativity. We can serve our fellows best by helping them awaken to this universal need for perpetual renaissance.

AQUARIUS 6

PERFORMER OF A MYSTERY PLAY

(SUBTLETY)

RUDHYAR: A MASKED FIGURE PERFORMS RITUALISTIC ACTS IN A MYSTERY PLAY

OUR ROLES AS AGENCIES OF HIGHER FORCES

As well as simply living, we serve the function of bringing higher mysteries to Earth

Today we still see acted out the old rituals that bind a group into awareness of ancient archetypes – from Mardi Gras to Easter parades, Father Christmas to Halloween pumpkin monsters. This is because they provide an essential method to raise individuals out of personality and into a collective group consciousness. It is how we learn to surrender self to transpersonal realities with the attendant remembering of the awareness of our larger responsibilities.

Awareness brings the subtlety that shows grace in being and relating

Shakespeare reminds us that '*all the world's a stage*', yet we are constantly challenged to remember our roles as performers – this requires a very sensitive intelligence, a noteworthy subtlety of being.

Reality, as conventionally perceived, is no less convenient than a mystery play as a means of self-realisation. In all of our day to day events, we need to act out our characters convincingly well.

A person's particular characteristics are exalted in relationship, and there is no end to the variations of expression. In fact it is only through a variety of relationships that our full potentialities can be stimulated. So to play out in our various associations we become performers, with very different temperaments. The mind has a mediating function in these interactions; its purpose is to interpret the world to the individual and the individual to the world; it is hugely important. It simply is not enough to allow individuality to be influenced, and so cultivated, by reference to our feelings alone.

All experiences have significance. The value of any experience, when interpreted creatively, is heightened in personality on the one hand, and in life itself on the other. The trick is to find a point of creative balance where we can assimilate what happens within our many social relationships to bring better understandings and deeper connection. This process must involve both feelings and thought.

With such awareness we win the gift of enacting deeper, more meaningful opportunities within the realms of human potential. We start to understand the real and subtle motivations that drive us – why we do what we do, want what we want, and fear whatever we fear.

Such subtlety invariably bestows grace – we develop the knack of noticing the effect we have on others, and their conscious and unconscious responses to us.

There can be a tendency to lack practicality, and all too frequently to be teased by the seductive pull of self-mystification. This is to be minimised because too much self-analysis can surreptitiously lead us towards distress, and if we become lost in the fascination of self, we lose the power to act spontaneously with full commitment.

AQUARIUS 7

A CHILD BORN OF AN EGGSHELL

(ESSENTIALITY)

RUDHYAR: A CHILD IS SEEN BEING BORN OUT OF AN EGG

FREEDOM FROM OLD WAYS AND STANDARDS

Dramatic changes occur when entirely new mutations occur that break traditions

Ancestral wisdom drives our evolutionary processes by which, very slowly over the generations, our race develops higher consciousness. Yet, another development process is also at play, whereby a quantum shift can occur – a revolutionary mutation that catapults us into new awareness very suddenly, and we are no longer as bound up in old ways and their limited understandings. We can create inspired and totally new realities.

Essence is spirit, and nothing is more essential

The symbolism of an egg is frequently found in various cultures; it represents the idea of a matrix. We are born into individuality out of a combination of influences – spiritual and material – such as the stardust of our physicality, the genetic coding carried in our DNA, and more subtle moulding of the zeitgeist and local geopolitical realities. That which pulls all these factors together into a single moment's statement is essentially the matrix of what we are.

The eggshell may seem to limit us, but it does not. When we are ready, we crack out – until then, the contours of our roots and circumstances do more to nurture than to constrain.

We are sustained by the assurance that we belong, and we are protected.

At first we identify the source of that protection externally as home, mother, community and earth-based securities. As we become mature and aware, we learn of the greater and more exhilarating truth – that in essence we are indestructible and incorruptible.

Essence is spirit, and nothing is more essential. It cannot be broken down into components, destroyed or compromised. Whenever we are in alignment with our spiritual essence, we are completely free of danger – and this occurs whenever we are projecting our highest aspirations into the world. It may well be counterintuitive, yet we are only ever truly safe when we are racing headlong with total blind enthusiasm towards our wildest dream.

Whereas the self is found by cracking out of its nurturing eggshell, it is lost again only in full-on inspired enthusiasm. Somewhat surprisingly, it is therefore found at a higher level – a passionate level beyond ordinary reality.

AQUARIUS 8

BEAUTIFULLY GOWNED WAX FIGURES

(IMPACT)

RUDHYAR: BEAUTIFULLY GOWNED WAX FIGURES ON DISPLAY

MODELLING OURSELVES ON ANOTHER

Creating the future out of idealising images

In order to project a clear, new vision into the future we need to imagine its details very clearly. Having no better examples to copy and contrast we can use models that we invent purely out of our imagination. As, in some ways, science fiction drives the inventiveness of technology, so fashion models drive our sense of beauty and grace, and our morality and spiritual teachings come to shape how we think and feel about life, and thus shapes how we experience reality itself.

By idealising others we find resonance with our own potential for achievement

The human spirit, as it gathers strength, has an ineradicable vanity, a self-importance that is by no means always graceful. Yet this can have real usefulness, and most certainly has impact upon how things unfold.

Both beauty and reputation are illusions that dissolve with time and full exposure, and here, from the finery it wears in a shop window, or being included in displays at Madam Tussaud's, a dummy shows the celebration both of superficial form and impotent reputation.

However, it draws attention to the potential for achievement through the effective dramatisation of human character on some level of everyday understanding – something we can relate to.

A strong psychological dynamic for individual effort comes from the direct influence of outstanding beauties and heroes – even notorious people. There is no completely corrupt example of the human experience – even the bad guys have good qualities.

We find empathy for famous strangers through resonance with our personal idealisations. We hold in admiration another person because, perhaps in some hidden way, potentially, we have within us the quality we most admire in them.

Of course, it is foolish to engage in a futile effort to recapture any outworn experience, especially of another person who is so effectively fictionalised and made into an ideal.

Yet here, implicit in the symbolism of the waxworks, is shown the necessity to recognise and identify the values that we consider worthy of emulation, in order that we can refine our own aspirations, and proceed thereby to realise them ourselves.

AQUARIUS 9

A FLAG TURNED INTO AN EAGLE

(DRAMATISATION)

RUDHYAR: A FLAG IS SEEN TURNING INTO AN EAGLE

TAKING STEPS TO REALISE THE DREAM

It is not enough to have a dream; we must also take action to make it come true

It is not enough to envision the future, even with clear intention; we must act. We must take affirmative action and, as Gandhi says, 'become the change we want to see in the world'. Doing is required, thinking is not sufficient. In this way we come to change who we are at a fundamental level, without which nothing much will ever change.

Loyalty to a shared ideal makes collective power evident

There is a clue in this image that makes us contemplate humanity's inexhaustibly fertile imagination and its part to play in our accomplishments. It is not only through utter self-dedication that we prosper – we always need to imagine the fruits of our efforts first and foremost. The flag comes first, the eagle follows.

A flag, perhaps here one that shows an eagle, is meant to be representative of certain qualities – perhaps aspired towards by a state – and this properly engenders the all-important pride of nationalism, which brings together a large group of disparate interests to form a stronger unit against perceived dangers and towards social improvement.

By contrast, the bird itself is not a picture that simply dramatises that positive quality; it is a violent hunter, a cruel animal, which may well remind us of the human potential for vindictiveness and abuse of power over others. However noble it is as an animal, it lacks humanity, and so is deficient in the more compassionate aspects of life, which are the foundation-stones of any possible nation we may want to be part of.

Therefore the determination to make this eagle-power evident through our own way of living will need to be balanced against the softer loyalties implicit in being human.

Like any animal, we have a capacity for significant self-representation, and therefore the power to rise to every situation, and get from it its most rewarding self-serving potentials.

Yet, we also want to make a contribution of enduring worth, and find a purposeful way to bring a vision of a better life to bear upon our own social situations, as a service to those who align with the values which our flag represents.

As individuals, we prosper as we spring to action in defence of our loyalties, through serving our larger community – and eventually we may all expect to find ourselves in service to an ideal rather than the dictates of expediency.

AQUARIUS 10

A POPULARITY THAT PROVES EPHEMERAL

(APPROBATION)

RUDHYAR: A MAN WHO HAD FOR A TIME BECOME THE EMBODIMENT OF A POPULAR IDEAL IS MADE TO REALISE THAT AS A PERSON HE IS NOT THIS IDEAL

THE PERSON IS NOT THE ARCHETYPE

Underneath the glamour of a celebrity the person is only yet another imperfect person

As we engage with archetypes and tune in to their power and wisdom we have also to find the ability to forget ourselves as people and surrender our egotism into the higher consciousness. We are not archetypes and not able to withstand the projections upon ourselves of an ideal, which is necessarily beyond human attainment. We are people and we need to be in touch with our vulnerabilities and faults. It is important occasionally to look again at what we have become and who we really are.

Both applause and censure are temporary; soul qualities are enduring

This is all about the approval, or approbation, that is offered by society, and our need for caution in accepting it. Popularity inevitably proves ephemeral – someone else will be flavour-of-the-month very soon and we could be left high and dry.

Any continued sustainment of our own stability of being should be looked for in the more enduring aspects of reality – things hard-won and worthwhile, and things that define us and speak of our soul qualities.

We must learn to accept applause as encouragement for our own self-strengthening – but only in the moment, rather than as something to hoard and recall nostalgically.

Life always offers us a gift for bringing our issues to a dramatic consummation at a time of crisis, and the eternal challenge is to remain true to ourselves, whether or not this wins social approval.

What is worthy of recognition is a courageous self-confidence and an unflagging faith – which often comes to an individual at the point of climax in their experience of challenge.

The swing of the pendulum between endorsement and repudiation is certain. It is better not to care either way – both applause and censure are distractions we can do without.

Also, although opportunism is often appropriate, like everything it can be taken to extremes and lose merit. We should be wary not to indulge overmuch, and count upon our popularity and good fortune, lest the pendulum sways against us a little too soon and we fall from grace before we achieve the result we want.

AQUARIUS 11 – 15

ENVISIONING

Our greatest contribution to the community, to God and to ourselves is the same thing – to live in peaceful joy. From this condition all things flow harmoniously, we feel love and beauty, we create sparkling works, we serve, we listen and we feel for others. The path to this state takes us through dark places within and yet can be successfully navigated by the strong willed and cleared minded. We need to trust inner guidance and also find external guidance from more advanced individuals. It is the highest purpose of life to do so.

Often a word's ambiguity of meaning actually helps us towards a more subtle grasp of the nature of the reality it points us towards. Dreaming is typically a passive experience of an unconscious person; yet the word also is employed as a synonym for envisioning. So we ask – is there an attitude of mind that can hold both of these conditions simultaneously? On a passive level, we need to trust that dreams during sleep and, by extension, all intuition, are clues for us to usefully interpret as guidelines for action. Yet on an active level, we cut pathways in the mind by active dreaming – by focusing frequently and passionately with concentrated attention upon our envisioned future.

Mastery of life experience comes from envisioning a progressive and satisfying self-development in service to the community, so we need to create our plans based on the affirmation of alignment between social needs and personal desire. These are the very tracks of a mental attitude that magnetises our dreams towards us, which in turn help lay down the templates of our experiences.

AQUARIUS 11

MAN TÊTE-À-TÊTE WITH HIS INSPIRATION

(ECSTASY)

RUDHYAR: DURING A SILENT HOUR, A MAN RECEIVES A NEW INSPIRATION WHICH MAY CHANGE HIS LIFE

TRUSTING THE CREATIVE URGE

Truly inspired wisdom and action does not come from the mind

Knowledge that is taught, recorded and passed down is what informs the cultural background from which creative new ideas may spring. Yet the creative urge itself arises from within and is accessed better when we learn in silent contemplation how and why to tune in to the Source of inspiration. Wisdom so received is of a higher order and is potentially life-changing.

To walk our talk, we must normally balance self-interest with service

Man tête-à-tête with his inspiration – is an image of the condition we can access when our alignment with the highest sense of self, being one with the source and force of our creativity, is the normal condition of our lives. In this condition, we can access ecstasy – this is a state of absolute satisfaction in the transcendental experiences of selfhood, when we are neither attached to – nor detached from – our sense of identity.

As much as we have to accept the overshadowing of the universal order, we must also assert and demonstrate our own special capacities, by which we make our personal claim upon worldly life. A balance is to be found between inspiration and action, the muse and the inner executive. The muse shows us what to create, and the executive shows us how.

Each of us lives in constant intimacy with spiritual truths of every sort. We consistently renew our wisdom realisations, and find that all we need to validate them is ever close at hand.

Our need to act continually in our best self-interest is a personal truth. Its counterpoint polarity is the universal truth of service and self-surrender.

The real knack to find fulfilment in life is to find a way to translate every vision into practical consummation. To walk our talk. Then we find that there is no difference at all between our spiritual faith and our worldly expression, because we are one with inspiration at all times.

We need fully to grasp that an enthusiastic idealism and tireless desire to serve becomes a realistic life path only when we are satisfied that we have stabilised a strategy to achieve our goals on a personal level. Otherwise, our will to serve simply becomes an aspect of the complete self-obsession that typifies an ardent, but misguided, idealist. How could any philosophy be meaningful if it does not fulfil, or at least eradicate, our deepest aspirations?

Eventually we need to rededicate our special capacities – even our individual experiences – so that they are transmuted into a spiritual statement. What previously we used for practical purposes, we now use for the demonstration of our spiritual imperatives and beliefs.

AQUARIUS 12

PEOPLE ON STAIRS GRADUATED UPWARDS

(PROGRESSION)

RUDHYAR: ON A VAST STAIRCASE STAND PEOPLE OF DIFFERENT TYPES, GRADUATED UPWARD

WE ARE NOT ALL EQUAL

It is spiritually inspiring to think that we are all of the same worth but it is not so

If there is to be personal spiritual progression then there must necessarily be steps upwards and a sense of hierarchy in recognition that others are more advanced and standing where one day we can stand. This spiritual hierarchy is in contrast to the egalitarian philosophy of democracy. Sufis talk of the democracy of the ego and the aristocracy of the soul. It is important to recognise honestly where we stand, and then we can help those at an earlier stage of evolution while emulating those more advanced.

Given the Moon today, we will ask for the Sun tomorrow

The image of *people on stairs graduated upwards* is one of progression. It shows how we all want to rise up, to achieve a better set of circumstances than we currently have.

There is no limit to the level of aspiration in a person – if we are given the Moon today, then we will ask for the Sun tomorrow. For most, momentary consummation is everything, and yet it is so short-lived. The modern world is typified by a general inclination to make frantic efforts to keep ahead of others – or at the very least to keep up with them.

Taken to an extreme, such an attitude creates all manner of difficulties, including stress, unpopularity, and self-disappointment. Yet, underneath the flurry and push of getting ahead, there is a very real and reasonable motivation – the common drive towards optimisation of our experience in all aspects of life.

Inner gratification is a very strong force – one which demands that we do the best we can for our family and ourselves, notwithstanding that others may end up with less than us. For example the idea of Communism seemed quite reasonable, even visionary in a spiritual way, yet it could not be expected to work sustainably, simply because people are rather self-serving and of widely ranging levels of talent and application.

The reach of our vision is as the horizon – it moves towards greater and greater dreams as we approach it. The most effective attitude is to expect to make the most of all of our prior accomplishments as we progress to the next level.

There are inherent differences among people; some people are simply better at things than others. This could present real issues to make cooperative involvement unworkable – especially when they prove significantly more or less competent than ourselves. Yet typically it does not, and this is because we are willing to find something of value for ourselves in every experience. It is this which enables us to share endeavours generally with fellows, even those of unequal ability.

No outer experience, however satisfying in the moment, can offer sufficient grounds for self-fulfilment. For that we need to turn within and locate the central axis of our inner being, and progress further and further within, until we truly and utterly know the depth of who we are.

AQUARIUS 13

A BAROMETER

(INDICATION)

RUDHYAR: A BAROMETER

PLANNING FOR THE FUTURE

It is as foolhardy to ignore facts as it is to set out on a dangerous journey unprovisioned

Full consciousness enables us to read in today's reality the existence of, and qualities of, the seeds of the future. Together with a deep and intuitive understanding of cycles and the principles of resonance, this allows us to know what the seeds are probably going to become in time, and so discern something of the future. If we can do this then it is wise to do so in order to anticipate danger and opportunity for ourselves and the community.

It is because we need to gain control that we seek indications about the future

We find that natural processes are typically beyond our control, and therefore able to intrude upon our choices and comforts. Yet there is an underlying order to life, which applies to everything, including the forces of Nature. Whatever can be measured is, to some extent, contained.

It is meaningful to distinguish between what is superficial, and what is real and dependable. We may not know whether it will rain tomorrow – but we do know that it will rain again one day. This is not clever or trite; it is how we maintain our sense of order by which we keep at bay the terror of our powerlessness in the face of natural forces.

Whether by using traditional superstition, old wives' tales, or a barometer to measure air pressure, we seek an indication to infer data about the future – because we feel the need to gain the sense that we have some measure of control.

The very process of enquiry into the future has an effect – we sharpen our powers of observation and develop exceptional competence in judgement. It seems meaningless to decide whether it is because we develop better powers of analysis, or we gain more resonance of intuition, the outcome is that we know more about what is likely to be coming towards us.

By this a secret is revealed – that all secrets can be revealed. Whatever we need to know can be made known when we train ourselves in the necessary attitude of mind. There is order in the universe, and its operating principles can be revealed to one who has the application to discover them.

It is a great love of ours to attempt to live our experiences in advance. Yet the reality, of what is, is immediate and circumstantial – it registers through our senses and takes physical form. However, the reality of what is to come is non-physical and affects the mind and heart. It is not without value to liken the barometer to the feelings we have – up and down, measuring atmosphere and giving clues about what might be coming next.

This whole practice of measuring the future against the present is the source material by which we conceptualise and gain broad generalisations and abstract ideas about life and how it all works. The past has given us clues, but our ability to predict examines how well we have understood them.

AQUARIUS 14

A TRAIN ENTERING A TUNNEL

(COURTESY)

RUDHYAR: A TRAIN ENTERING A TUNNEL

CUTTING THROUGH

Obstacles are certain on the road to achievement; we must cut through them

Most people cruise along reluctantly accepting their lot because it could be worse and it's not totally insufferable. Some other push with all their might in the wrong direction lost and blinded by the false wisdom that the concomitants of happiness are fame and fortune. Some are spiritually oriented and slowly move towards what they want to believe in without much intellectual evidence or discrimination applied to the belief they chose and whether that idealistic belief is in fact workable. Those remaining few, who are able to penetrate though the veil and learn the mystery, open up the ability to exert a special influence and achieve remarkable outcomes.

Normal everyday life can lead us to exciting visionary outcomes

A train enters a tunnel – this is what it is meant to do. It can be seen either as an uninspired conformity to limitation, or the courtesy of adherence to expectations. A typical person approaches an invisible future by following the track laid down by parents and more general influences, which to some may seem constraining and deterministic – yet to others it is both helpful and appropriate guidance towards proper societal integration.

Normal acceptable behaviour leads to the performance of our community duty – by providing whatever services we have agreed to take responsibility for.

Courteous participation in the more impersonal relationships we have with other community members shows of our normal, basic generosity of human personality.

Our eagerness for new experiences expresses through expanding our social life and responsibilities, and we need look no further than the straightforward track of work, home and friends to find satisfaction.

The civility is justified not from any spirit of altruism; it acts through these voluntary social involvements because the consequential refinement that occurs is as much for our own benefit as for others.

Our skills and talents can only ever be sharpened and become fit for purpose by actual employment. Our readiness to share them leads towards their perfection, and therefore increases our ability to improve outcomes of our own vision as well as the community's.

Our ability to meet the most exacting of demands in life – with all its various challenges and potentials – grows as we enter tunnels of uncertainty trusting in our gift of mutual courtesy. It is a gift we so deeply treasure and it comes about primarily through service to others.

AQUARIUS 15

TWO LOVEBIRDS SITTING ON A FENCE

(AFFIRMATION)

RUDHYAR: TWO LOVEBIRDS SITTING ON A FENCE AND SINGING HAPPILY

THE SPIRITUALLY UPLIFTING SENSE OF FULFILMENT

When we have done something good it feels good

In one sense or another, our spiritual journey is motivated by a yearning to end the state of separation in which we live. Sufis call this yearning Ishq, Divine Nostalgia. It arises when we leave the Source, and acts as a beacon to bring us home again. We need this beacon because the immersion into physicality makes us forget our Origin, so we need to feel what we cannot remember and bring to mind. We are safe and effectively at home when we find the direction to walk and the certainty that we will walk in no other direction; then we know deep and permanent joy.

The richness of our own life potential is illustrated in Nature's achievements

To be able to bring our destiny to fruition, it is completely appropriate to set the terms upon which we are willing to meet the world. Keeping control over our time and circumstances is very empowering and strengthens our position in all of our many interactions.

As we might see in a tropical garden, or an image of lovebirds, Nature delights in exhibiting how rich things can be when they reach self-fulfilment. We affirm this to be a metaphor for the potential richness of our own life.

It is natural to share such abundance, and such giving always tends to attract a deepening of emotional rapport and softening of personality.

When the personality has reached a high point of maturity on the inner level, then we become highly capable of performing our actions on a more magical level.

A sense of self-consistency becomes observable, has great appeal, and wins loyalty and cooperation to support our intentions. Results are achieved when the force of our clear intention is presented with certainty, and a special atmosphere that shows of our expectation of a particular successful outcome.

When we are capable of creating the world we choose, then there is always a danger of experiencing jealousy in its active or passive exhibition. It is good to find a way to minimise either of these unhelpful motivations, because we want neither of these feelings to corrupt our sense of wellbeing.

Most of us raise emotional romantic issues in importance above practical – and we are free to trust in the affirmation that life is for love and joy.

AQUARIUS 16 – 20

ASSURANCE

We have no choice but to find a way to manage our lives and on this Earth plane we are constantly in harm's way and not wise to trust other people completely. These challenging life circumstances are entirely necessary for us to face our issues; none of us is perfect and we each have to face and deal with our imperfections if we are to evolve personally and collectively. In a crisis we are tested and expanded and without this no spiritual unfolding can occur. However, in the end, for those of us who deal with our issues fully the blessing of a peaceful spiritual life is promised.

The stuff of life is resistant to change and is not easily adjusted when approached by wishy-washy enquiry. In order to accomplish a realised statement of what we have dreamt, we need to reach a condition of certainty. This does not mean that we know what is good for another person, or 'true' – it means impeccable confidence that the alignment, between what we believe in and what we are doing about it, will produce results. Any idea we have is first and foremost a descriptive aspect of individuality; it is not necessarily even relevant to another person, let alone universal – perhaps it does, perhaps it does not, address shared concerns. However, unless we ourselves feel assured of our conviction and become committed to it, then no-one else will.

AQUARIUS 16

BIG-BUSINESSMAN AT HIS DESK

(ACCOMPLISHMENT)

RUDHYAR: A BIG-BUSINESSMAN AT HIS DESK

ORGANISATIONAL ABILITY

It requires good management to cope with a world where resources are scarce

As a species we have an impressive ability to manage resources and create intended outcomes. This is exemplified by space exploration and the technologies of war. Yet in the past such ability was applied as much to create spiritual works as to manage the economics of war. We think of the Buddhist temples in the East and Stonehenge and more in the West. Typically, today a bright young adult is immediately caught up in the corporate system that offers training and a generous salary. Sadly, very few people who have excellent management capacity are willing to forego prestige and comfort and use it to create spiritual outcomes.

Accomplishment fails unless it confers a depth of character not disturbed by gain or loss

In business, we are constantly up against others who want to take more or give less, and will fight in order to achieve this. The image of a highly-effective manager and their accomplishments, speaks of the worthiness of profound involvement as a way to test and evolve character. This is done by consistently reaffirming what is important.

We have to prove ourselves against the forces that come up against us because personality develops if, and only if, we take on challenges that test us.

Similarly, day-to-day life is a real and valid challenge; even the most straightforward of matters are often difficult to deal with. Raising a family, owning a house, and pursuing a career, are all very demanding occupations from time to time, let alone when added to the burden of voluntary community responsibilities.

As situations ebb and flow, then we need to keep our attention on that which we find of true value if we are to maintain a position of advantage. The cutting edge of accomplishment demands total attention at the level of detail, and also anticipation.

Anything accomplished of real consequence leads to realisation of selfhood at an advanced level. This is how we know the difference between what has, and what has not, any real consequence – and these things are often quite atypical of what is expected.

Since we know, but forget, that fame and fortune are nothing unless they confer depth of character, we trust that there will be clear indications from others in our community should we degenerate into a level of ambition that has no merit beyond the superficial.

Evidence of true and abiding accomplishment is found in our ability to respond appropriately to all that occurs without feeling much disturbed by gain or loss, condemnation or applause.

AQUARIUS 17

A WATCHDOG STANDING GUARD

(PROBITY)

RUDHYAR: A WATCHDOG STANDS GUARD, PROTECTING HIS MASTER AND HIS POSSESSIONS

PROTECTION

It is necessary to guard ourselves from theft and injury

In a society too large for us to feel personally connected with everyone, which is driven mostly by materialistic pursuits, it is inevitable that we are at risk. People will intrude and attempt to take what is ours, so we put systems in place to protect and defend against this intrusion. This is no less true on the subtle planes of reality and those who psychically are sensitive and open are vulnerable to thought projections which come from unkind people. We need to learn techniques to guard against such curses and black magick. Visualisations of light are often employed.

Through discipline, we come to freedom

Our realistic expectation that people will behave in a civilised way – with probity – is somewhat like having a guard dog; it reassures us that we are safe to enjoy greater freedom of involvement with life. Otherwise our fearful but natural inclination is to shy away from the unknown and be suspicious and unfriendly towards strangers.

This is about being an upright, honest person – not only as a path of self-realisation, but also to claim a place of dignity within the context of community – we overcome our own animal fears because we feel shielded by social conventions of non-violence and decency, and we offer the same courtesy to others.

Communal interaction is as much facilitated by social agreements as by the generally felt appetite to relate to others. Such restrictions are applied through legal devices, morality and custom. We depend upon them to limit our exposure to risk.

Each of us is stronger because others are committed to maintain and reinforce community censure – so in turn, we do the same whenever circumstances call upon us to protect those in need of help.

If, individually and collectively, we are to find a way to achieve our highest potential, then we must live cooperatively – and this depends upon our determination to acknowledge a shared responsibility to do the right thing, and require others also to do so.

When we do the right thing, generally it works out well, and therefore our trust in the future strengthens – so we deepen our sense of wellbeing. In other words, by right living, we find that we grow in faith and achieve greater fulfilment.

Only by becoming a self-referential symbol of collective authority will we be able to become free of imposed restriction. Through discipline, we come to freedom.

AQUARIUS 18

A MAN UNMASKED

(ANALYSIS)

RUDHYAR: A MAN'S SECRET MOTIVES ARE BEING PUBLICLY UNMASKED

THE TRUTH ALWAYS OUTS IN THE END

No matter how cleverly we hide our secrets, they are invariably exposed

It is often expedient to keep secret what we do and what we think because the power of governments and social pressure encroach upon our individual freedom of self-expression. Punishment (albeit mild when compared to being burned at the stake) is not uncommon even today when certain esoteric practices are exposed. Yet a truly successful life is lived openly because we come to find our place where to be safe and fully self-expressive.

Curiosity about whys and wherefores in human behavoiur is the secret of self-revelation

The human species, and of course any individual, is capable of the most exceptional ineptitude. Evidence of such folly abounds – and we see how countries and people behave as though they were absolved from any accountability for their profound lack of grasp of the relationship between cause and effect. Yet we are all accountable and we should find a way to avoid generic thoughtlessness, or silly activity.

Immortal curiosity, which inevitably motivates an intelligent person, sponsors a never-ending trial-and-error process of behaviour; life is to be seen as a laboratory for our ideas and spirit of enquiry. Often people are self-defeating in their stubbornness. Even an amoeba will adjust its angle of approach in response to received information – "*this doesn't work, don't do it*". Yet, as intelligent beings, we ourselves are tasked not only to notice *that* it doesn't work but to understand why.

It's good to remember that these experiments are not without purpose; we have a goal. We are each trying to find more wonderful reasons for our existence. The advanced human is dedicated to become unmasked on the eternal path to self-discovery and self-expression.

This may appear counter-intuitive to one whose raison d'être is to be in service to the greater good. Yet we find that the path towards the realisation of universal connectedness lies first in development of self. We will never become a fully realised servant of others until we are fully realised masters of self. In the end we may learn to trust the community and repudiate self-reliance, yet we must do that from a position of strength not need.

The pursuit of knowledge is an aspect of compassion, is a way to serve, and is constantly shifting its focus as times change. Various activities – stargazing around a stone-age camp fire to find patterns in the moving lights above, puzzling how to control social networking preferences on Facebook, or getting to grips with the String Theory – are not fundamentally different in essence; they share the spirit of enquiry.

It is true that we demand that people make themselves fully accountable to the community because we feel that that is a requirement if the general welfare of all is to be attended to.

And yet we have the constant urge to support an individual's private interpretation of how this might be for them. This calls for us to unmask them and penetrate the depth of motivations that underpins eccentricities of human activity. Ready as we ever are to surrender and feel life just as it is, we are nevertheless equally compelled towards the analysis of why it is so.

AQUARIUS 19

A FOREST FIRE QUENCHED

(CONCERN)

RUDHYAR: A FOREST FIRE IS SUBDUED BY THE USE OF WATER, CHEMICALS AND SHEER MUSCULAR ENERGY

DEALING WITH EMERGENCIES

Most of us have to cope with a sudden and unexpected situation

We will face crises. Before they arise we may think we could not cope, but whatever comes to us is within our capacity to handle one way or another. It is a mark of faith that we believe that this is so, and perhaps it is the faith that makes it so. Life is certain to present challenges that we must rise to, because if it does not then we cannot rise. On occasion therefore we must pull out all the stops and do whatever is needed to get back on top of things.

Coping with intense problems cultivates individual gravitas and special levels of teamwork

In each of us there exists an exceptional capacity to cope – and this is called up only in an emergency because it is when metaphorically we need to quench forest fires that we emphatically commit to concern ourselves unreservedly with the task at hand.

Dealing with difficulties is a normal aspect of life, yet in a lot of people this creates a sensation of fear or anxiety.

A more expedient response to such situations would be to see how the personality can usefully be employed to harness skills that effectively manage the troublesome matter at hand.

Certain situations call for our caring response, and it is only when we allow ourselves to feel concern in the heart that we can awaken both the clarity and the ability to respond fittingly.

During the peak experiences of intense cooperation, which call for previously undiscovered self-expenditure, our greatest potentialities are awakened. Remarkably, a large number of old people look back to the years of war with fond nostalgia. Some, perhaps on a subtle unconscious level, even felt a strange sense of delight in calamity. They do not forget the fear and hardship, and yet the dominant recollection is more to do with the sense of comradeship and community, and their sense of pulling out all the stops to find heightened levels of ability, rising to the needs of the moment.

What could so easily be seen as misfortune can be turned around to become a successful adventure in the development of a much broader competence in social responsibility. Dealing with problems is what matures the individual because handling precarious external circumstances has weighty impact that cultivates gravitas – and so attracts the confidence and support of others less capable.

More than that, there is a deep-reaching feeling of profound relaxation after such an extraordinary event. This has a truly regenerative effect that renews vital forces, underpins optimism and trust so that a sense of certainty grows that whatever the future throws up can be dealt with satisfactorily.

AQUARIUS 20

A BIG WHITE DOVE, A MESSAGE BEARER

(CONVICTION)

RUDHYAR: A LARGE WHITE DOVE BEARING A MESSAGE

REWARD IN HEAVEN

Sooner or later we always get what we have earned

The dove follows Noah's flood to promise the end of calamity and the re-emergence of peace; in Sufism it symbolises the decent of Holy Spirit. 'Every spiritual step is the result of a victory over forces of inertia or destruction' teaches Dane Rudhyar. Without stress or calamity we would not know what spiritual peace is, and its sacred value. We are promised that there will be a spiritual blessing at the end of time of troubles.

Those who doubt live in doubt; those of faith will live in faith

The image is about humanity's recognition of a superior, transcendental perception of the nature of reality. Knowledge of it enables us to succeed in any field to which we apply ourselves, by fitting our desires and plans into the cosmic framework. This attracts support and minimises obstacles to achievement, especially those related to self-doubt and ambiguity of intention.

The message-bearing white dove carries its communication in metaphorical form, and not everyone has knowledge of how to decipher the secrets. For those who have taken the time to learn the dove's coded language, there are always signs that show of unfailing divine favour for a faithful heart.

The dove is used symbolically in a wide range of cultures and religions; it generally points to the delivery of a universal, sacred message of purity, peace and love. It stimulates spiritual conviction, which is a source of inspiration and assurance; it generates confidence, and the power of certainty. When we have it, we somehow exude an aura of rightness of being, which influences people to believe in and endorse us.

Such inner faith is a double-edged sword however; it can as easily bring about sanctimonious self-deception as it can deliver wisdom and strength of character. Also it can be can be very dangerously wrong – invested in unsuitable ideas and allegiances.

We are all inclined to project our prejudices onto everything we see and hear, and then an unconscious distortion of understanding inevitably occurs. We do need some particularity of belief to underpin our life strategies, yet it is imperative that we monitor and control what we choose to believe. Since what we think governs what we create as our life experience, the mind, as the first agency of creativity, needs to be trained to avoid any negativity or unhelpful bias.

Spiritual insights as these are no less real because an analytic, reasoning mind may choose to dismiss them as naive credulousness. One person knows of the subtle realms, the next does not, and each is convinced of the other's error and foolishness. Let those who doubt live in doubt; those of faith will live in faith.

The special gift for knowing when to act, and what to do, comes from something deeper than just rational thinking. A graceful blend of trusting conviction and reasonable doubt is a powerful mixture in a disciplined mind, and when we open up to balance our thinking mind with more subtle perceptions and feelings, then we find that consciousness expands to embrace reality more completely.

AQUARIUS 21 – 25

KNOWLEDGE

It is a truly prodigious task to overcome emotionality without strangling the feelings, especially when disillusionment and grief hit us hard. But we can count on the support of kind people around us, and also we ourselves will find kindness bubbling up towards others in their time of struggle. We need to find the highest level of self-discipline if we are to free ourselves from imposed discipline, and then we find that there is a condition of mind, a state of consciousness, that can be found and briefly inhabited but not sustained indefinitely. It takes us out of duality and so above all emotions, yet with heightened sensitivity to feelings and clarity of perception. If we frequently practise being in this state then at some point the third eye opens, in other words the pineal gland is awakened after a long period of dormancy. Then we can see it all.

The events of our lives are scenes and scenarios of a mystery play, the revelation of whose meaning requires the subtlety of a high mind. Nose against the window-pane of society, yet anchored as we are in a different reality, it may please us to observe the frenetic clashing and banging of the world, with no need, and certainly no intention, of taking on common, yet uninspiring, viewpoints, which we may find lack profundity of insight.

Yet sympathetic understanding is an aspect of our humanity; it is a degree of knowledge more profound than the conceptual, and so much more than science or logic. It comes from the gentle, compassionate realisation that we all are flawed, all damaged. Without this measure of awareness, then our quirkiness is merely for show, a cleverness to impress and steal attention. But when we have escaped conventionality to face our own demons, and we have come back strong and true, then we are unencumbered in applying our perceptions uniquely, yet realistically and kind-heartedly.

Character becomes enriched by multiple experiences of set-back and bounce-back; without this we remain bland and sheep-like. Only through friction can the potential within us be exposed – as indeed rock formations of staggering beauty are exposed by sandstorms. Our uniqueness is that which distinguishes us from the pack and enables the possibility of thinking outside the box. It arises only by facing up to the shadowy parts within.

AQUARIUS 21

A WOMAN DISAPPOINTED AND DISILLUSIONED

(CLEARANCE)

RUDHYAR: A DISAPPOINTED AND DISILLUSIONED WOMAN COURAGEOUSLY FACES A SEEMINGLY EMPTY LIFE

FACING EMOTIONAL PAIN WITH STOICISM

Things go wrong, we get upset but we must carry on

Sometimes we face the future with the expectation that nothing much of value is coming our way; this occurs when we have had our hopes dashed and cannot reaffirm optimism. It is a great emotional challenge to resist despair and courageously and stubbornly choose to be hopeful. In fact, perhaps the greatest gift of faith is the refusal to allow pessimism to take hold. Faith is not a gift or an opinion but a decision; it indicates exceptional maturity.

Nothing superficial endures – and only profound eternal realities bring lasting happiness

Any attempt towards fulfilment of self through a capitalisation on purely physical assets must fail eventually. However beautiful or strong we may be, it all passes away sooner or later and, if we have squandered opportunities for real self-improvement, we are left without much inner strength of character, or even elegance of personality.

It is only by accessing the deeper potentials of the being that self-discovery can occur, and the curse of beauty so readily denies the beautiful any real possibilities of advancement.

The image suggests that a woman has become at last disappointed and disillusioned as she gains insight into the superficiality of her appeal. Clearance is required and provided by this realisation – she clears from her emotional body the self-damaging belief that her form is her best asset. We could extend this idea to include anyone who gets older and loses power because they become less appealing. This is sure evidence of previous emotional immaturity and its corresponding distortion of wisdom.

What arises, to replace the false trust in the superficial, is an inherent gift for pressing on and gaining increased powers with every setback.

Personal frustrations can then be seen not so much a denial of opportunity as a challenge to support a genuine self-realisation.

Nothing we depend upon remains the same, and some of it is entirely ephemeral. While it is a joy to capture the pleasure of the springtime of our lives, it is the eternal realities that bring true long-term happiness. The distress of the soul is inevitable whenever it seeks its sustainment from elements that have no anchorage in our deepest, authentic nature – so to be really content, we have to locate the aspect of us which is enduring, true and basic.

Some people are willing to allow the acceptance of all defeat as final. This is inconsistent with general experience – we see everywhere the capacity for renewal and regeneration. Our disappointments can so often be the first clue we have that a new and better life is approaching.

AQUARIUS 22

A RUG PLACED ON THE FLOOR FOR CHILDREN TO PLAY

(REFINEMENT)

RUDHYAR: RUG IS PLACED ON THE FLOOR OF A NURSERY SO CHILDREN CAN PLAY IN WARM COMFORT

GENERAL KINDNESS OF HUMANITY

Despite rumours to the contrary, people are unnecessarily, yet reliably kind

There is great kindness in the world, and those of us strong in faith will look for it, and expect to find it, yet never forget to appreciate it fully and reciprocally. Some see the opposite and so find the opposite. During times of trouble we rarely know exactly how or when we will be supported, but trusting that it will all turn out right in the end is a very sound life strategy.

We have a duty to deepen our enjoyment

A child playing on a rug is not the least concerned with community approval, yet serves society with its innocent self-centeredness. Should this facility become obsolete on reaching adulthood? The enjoyment of simple pleasures promotes a close relationship with the soul's mysterious agenda, which is obscured under conditions of stress, whenever we try too much to fit in with society. Surely we have a duty to deepen our enjoyment through the refinement to the fullest potential of what life offers us?

Actively seeking out opportunities for self-enrichment, we find – to a truly extraordinary extent – that we are able to depend upon life to throw up the resources and opportunities we need to flourish and grow.

Our desire for everyday comforts and conveniences speak of the hidden inclination of the soul's will and capacity to enhance personal experience. Full enjoyment of life is in the detail, the perfection of satisfaction.

A controversial attitude to society enables a sharpening of awareness, in particular self-awareness. Our self-serving choices often exclude us from the warmth of community approval, which in turn so often inclines us to greater eccentricity. Certain encounters present. These challenge us to discover the true self, and its unflagging ability to concentrate the will in order to excel and accomplish.

Subtle realisations arising from this incline us towards being different from the common herd, whose members lack such awareness. We look for opportunities to express distinctions, in order to become more obviously unique. Optimisation of personal advantage is a wholeheartedly legitimate strategy. The openings are ever-present, and actually increase as we seek them and take them.

Inevitably sometimes this requires us to engage with others in joint ventures, and as much as we are inclined to serve others, in turn life serves our own particular requirements. The more aptly and carefully we attend to our own duties the more our desires come to fruition, and the more our needs are met.

This leads to a profoundly-felt sense of wellbeing and trust that all is good, and that our inclination towards carefree self-indulgence is an acceptable celebration of abundance.

AQUARIUS 23

A BIG BEAR SITTING DOWN AND WAVING ALL ITS PAWS

(APTITUDE)

RUDHYAR: A BIG BEAR SITTING DOWN AND WAVING ALL ITS PAWS

THE DISCIPLINE OF SELF-CONTROL

We learn to control our animal nature so we can have it available as a resource

In each of us a powerful animal nature exists, and if left unchecked would cause unhelpful and antisocial outcomes. Yet life is nothing more than a series of training exercises and examinations through which we learn to tame the beast. It requires not only obedience to imposed discipline, although this is how the training starts, to be effective it must truly lead to full acceptance of the imperative of self-discipline. When we are self-controlled then we may safely employ whatever animal power we can access.

Power and knowledge come only when animal passion and spiritual passion unite

A big bear sitting down and waving all its paws – the powerful bear represents a person's animal nature – it is seated, so passive, and yet gesticulating, so expressive. This illustrates the conviction that the passionate spirit of the red-blooded human, when tamed by the higher self, is a source of great power.

By struggling to gain absolute mastery of our own lower nature, we find that nothing is beyond our capacity. We could use our emotions in frantic efforts to gain and hold attention, as so many people do. But it's better to use it to cultivate an appetite for life, by following the desire nature to the point of crisis, and then in full awareness, resolving the issues arising – of darkness and light.

Before we can participate fully in any grander reality, we do need to show the worth of our own specific gifts – worldly skills to address worldly goals. It is pure nonsense to expect to reach high spiritual states without first coming to terms with ordinary life – and that also includes dealing with dark psychological imbalances we have inherited and internalised.

Our desire for spiritual experiences shows in a willingness to dramatise our potentials whenever opportunity presents itself. This may well involve challenges and even conflict, as we test our new ideas out in practice, often going against established habits and social norms.

Knowledge about ultimate reality is of no consequence unless it can be satisfactorily shown – by our tangible life achievements – to be a workable life principle in material terms.

Our soul work follows on from our demonstration that we have an aptitude for worldly life – and an ability to bring every function of life to a high personal fulfilment. How can a spiritual principle be valid if it does not bring such abilities? That which does not survive the robust tests of life on earth has no place in life on earth – this surely is self-evident?

The soul finds itself through the excellence it makes and re-makes out of the very fabric of itself. We are here to experience the endless options available, through which we may further examine each separate aspect of our eternal being, in a never-ending process of self-expression and self-discovery.

AQUARIUS 24

MAN TURNING HIS BACK ON PASSION AND TEACHING FROM EXPERIENCE

(SERENITY)

RUDHYAR: A MAN, HAVING OVERCOME HIS PASSIONS, TEACHES WISDOM IN TERMS OF HIS EXPERIENCE

SHARING OUR EXPERIENCES TO TEACH OTHERS

It is the implied duty of those who know to instruct those who do not know

Those of us who have taken a significant step towards deepening our level of maturity have a role to play in the development process of others who have taken fewer steps. We are able to explain what is happening and what to do about it to another as they encounter similar challenges to what we have experienced. It is implied that there is a duty to assist another if we are able as they struggle with a problem we have ourselves overcome.

Serenity is found when knowledge and experience are in harmony

Our passions record the difference between what we experience and what we genuinely understand. Turning from them, we demonstrate that we have learned their lessons, and found a place of peace, where knowledge and experience are in constant dynamic harmony. The self is thus refined more and more, so that the inner rewards become so much more valuable than the outer success that naturally follows. Serenity is at hand.

Those with a developed sensitivity to the demands of the world can find it all very disheartening, and become cynical in their day-to-day disappointments, expecting to be displeased – even as a way of life.

What remedies this is a broad and deep participation in everyday and ordinary activities of the general population. It is then seen that in fact there is no generality within the population; everyone's life and circumstances are uniquely touching and, when seen truly, stimulate wisdom.

The very act of sharing our gifts and rewards imbues them with their special value, and so our most precious gift is the ability to relate deeply with another. This requires heart as well as mind.

Humanity's penchant for self-obsession is not wholly without grace or spiritual importance, yet the self must assimilate itself within the higher vision of self in order to find peace. This is done secretly. So, in the company of those whose problems reach out with an unsettling influence, inwardly we remember grace, and all is well.

Accomplishment does not require us to deal with others' issues; the opposite is the case. By deepening our own convictions, we find such a profundity of inner stillness that serenity becomes the constancy of our being. This is what leads to success in all endeavours, and also has the greatest healing effect.

We can gently absorb ourselves into this place of peace, detached from externals, yet quite capable and willing to serve selflessly. We can give the appearance of a thoroughly integrated, properly functioning unit of society – despite being almost completely free of it.

AQUARIUS 25

A BUTTERFLY WITH THE RIGHT WING MORE PERFECTLY FORMED

(UNIQUENESS)

RUDHYAR: A BUTTERFLY WITH THE RIGHT WING MORE PERFECTLY FORMED

TRANSFORMING EMOTIONALITY INTO SPIRITUAL WISDOM

There is a state above duality where we can hold two opposing emotions

What we experience as emotions is normally quite disturbing to our sense of peaceful poise; yet for those who have worked on themselves these energies can be transmuted. The sense is here suggested that when the heavy drag of emotionality is released an individual can 'mutate' to a more aware state of perception. It is not entirely unlike the expansion of consciousness that goes hand in glove with the opening of the third eye.

As we explore our own idiosyncrasies, and have to deal with those of others

A butterfly with the right wing more perfectly formed – this strange image speaks to the uniqueness of each and every one of us. Like snowflakes, we are a little bit different from anything and everything else. Unlike snowflakes, we spend quite a lot of time giving serious consideration to our distinguishing features.

The right wing and left wing have slightly different appearances, and indeed we too could never be exactly in balance. Whether we are triggered by this into an unhappy, rebellious conceit – or a knack to turn deficiency into a real asset – is a fundamental life test, and the choice we make.

As an inevitable part of our own human nature, we are imperfect. Because of this, our lives take on a whole depth of meaning that would otherwise be impossible, as we explore our own idiosyncrasies, and have to deal with those of others.

An underlying psychological integrity and stamina gives us the capacity, which we all have, to overcome any handicap that is imposed upon us by our distinctions. It is very likely in fact to be the key aspect that distinguishes us in our originality of character.

These dissimilarities, whether physical or more subtle, are the noteworthy constituent parts which constitute the individuality of an individual. On any level of experience, they remain the primary basis of all important contributions to our self-knowing.

Functionally, the integration of conscious existence – into the world we have created – requires that we take unique form, with all the nuanced qualities that uniqueness implies. So as we observe what is considered normal by people we live around, it is both intuitive and inescapable that we are required to study the differences that make the difference. What is it exactly that makes us who and what we are?

The self mobilises its faculties successfully only as it takes full advantage of these significant differences. This shows that our imperfections are often the real source of our effective power in the world.

AQUARIUS 26 – 30

ORIGINALITY

Clarity of intelligence, and softness of heart, need to be brought into balance and employed together to manage life with expediency and grace. Then we are ready to take initiation and surrender to, and yet simultaneously claim, group consciousness.

Created in God's image, we are creators ourselves, given the power of free will to manipulate the field of universal possibility to our heart's desire. Realising this, our joyful task becomes clear – we need to rework what has been and what is, into what will be, according to our most joyful, playful, reach of mystical ingenuity and originality. Hindus teach that there is no settled external reality, that all we perceive is made up out of the imaginings of the mind – our own mind – singular, not collective. So not only can we invent life the way we want it, actually we cannot do anything else. Even if we do not accept the eastern philosophy, we must surely realise that our perceptions can only be based on our own unique experiences – so our inner reality is for us to fabricate – so then let us invent what makes us joyful, secure and loving.

AQUARIUS 26

A HYDROMETER

(EFFICIENCY)

RUDHYAR: A HYDROMETER

TECHNOLOGICAL SKILLS

A knowledge of how these machines work brings power to overcome Nature

When primitives faced the daily risk of starvation, cold and wild animals, their survival instincts created a compelling motivation to develop technologies to cope. From building fires to making wheels and yokes for oxen, there was a slow but inexorable trek to inventing cars and mobile phones. Whether it is a hydrometer to maintain our car batteries, or a charger for our phones, the operation of technology demands of us the mental capacity to manage machines. This shapes the collective mind of humanity, and this shaping process – which must not lead us to deny what is entirely of the earth – is nonetheless a necessary aspect of our evolution.

We learn to find a way somehow to turn everything around to our advantage

A hydrometer is something that measures an aspect of physical reality, and points to one of the facilities we have – powers of immediate analysis – which enable us to achieve commonplace, practical goals with efficiency. Measurement is an aspect of coping well with, and to some extent controlling, material reality.

By this process we gain the full assurance of an intelligent ordering to be found throughout the world of everyday realities. Without this, life would be absolutely terrifying.

Worrying, especially over trifles, is entirely self-defeating. So having assurance of guaranteed, predictable continuity is empowering. We know when the Sun will rise, when the tide will be full and when to plant our seeds to gain optimum benefit from climate conditions; this assurance is not to be taken lightly.

We come to see that a very real cooperation of natural conditions and forces may be enlisted for any project of special concern.

We need to learn the operating principles that govern the environment we choose to influence. By this process, we learn that we can take more responsibility for what occurs, to shape events to suit our own convenience, and therefore master of our lives and destinies.

An aspect of this is to choose – and to learn how – to capitalise on any difficulties that arise. This is essential optimism – find a way somehow to turn everything around to our advantage, including words, resources, difficulties and disappointments.

Thus we gain an exceptional ability in manipulating the fundamental complexities of living, and come to enjoy the challenges as means to further development of our powers, in the full certainty that, whatever occurs, we end up better off.

AQUARIUS 27

AN ANCIENT POTTERY BOWL FILLED WITH VIOLETS

(TRADITION)

RUDHYAR: AN ANCIENT POTTERY BOWL FILLED WITH FRESH VIOLETS

DEVELOPING THE SOFTER FEELINGS

When we have around us beautiful and vulnerable things we feel more sensitively

Before the modern world diminished the contrast between what men do and what women do, the tendency had been to promote feminine values more clearly by having these qualities associated with women. The softer side of life was shown to us typically by the modesty of a cultured woman who could arrange flowers in a pretty, valuable vase, positioned to be especially vulnerable to breakage, so that brash behaviour was effectively discouraged. This allowed for the fuller expression of delicate feelings in both the sexes.

Traditions that anchor community values give comfort and strength, but are not absolutes

It takes clear-minded strength of identity to avoid the loss of self in conventionality and its meaningless trappings. There may well be, within our culture, a tradition that explains why we should place violets in pottery – but there may not. Whichever we feel is true, it is for us to ascribe meaning to our activities, rather than to accept blindly that what was done before should be done again *ad infinitum*.

No matter the shifting forms life presents to us, there are always tokens of an enduring stability on which the ephemeral and the superficial are unable to make any significant, immediate impact. This is what tradition is.

Its meaning lies in its value as an ultimate assurance to the human heart. We take comfort, and strength, from the knowledge of what is expected of us, our rights and duties, the normal way to behave, and what we may expect of others.

When we are studying the permanence or changelessness of the real, we must not confuse the absolute with the relative. Tradition is held within a culture, and is an attempt to anchor the community to a set of values – yet these values are space/time dependent; they are not actually beyond challenge. Incontrovertible tradition is tyranny. The modern generation has the function of updating traditions to respond to new circumstances with new consciousness.

Whereas the stuff and diversity of our communal organisation are always being replaced, there is an over-all continuance of meaning in which these variables exist. It is this deeper reality which has truth as its essence.

The self may anchor itself in tradition – and this is both valid and empowering, like the roots of a plant. Yet the plant also has leaves – and actually exists in order to flower and fruit. Correspondingly, we must not think that the roots are all and everything – they serve, but should never rule.

There is sustenance and security to be found in rootedness, and this sponsors both our aspirations and achievements, and one who is well-anchored in truth attains a high realisation of values, and a real gift for using them – above and beyond the normal person's spiritual or material reach. These people are candidates to become exemplars of the current mode of tradition, elders who carry with gravitas the voice of the past as it evolves to become the foundation of the future.

AQUARIUS 28

A TREE FELLED AND SAWED

(IMMEDIACY)

RUDHYAR: A TREE FELLED AND SAWED TO ENSURE A SUPPLY OF WOOD FOR THE WINTER

CAREFUL USE OF NATURAL RESOURCES

A tree felled and sawed to ensure a supply of wood for the winter

Working in a forest to make a generous woodpile is a wonderfully fulfilling experience. It requires mental clarity to employ machinery, usually camaraderie between men, foresight, and muscular strength – and is profoundly enhanced by the knowledge that the task's result is to offer warmth to one's family and community. If this task is undertaken only when the weather gets cold then it is too late because there is a process to go through including allowing a period on months for the wood to season. We need to remember in springtime that winter is coming and do whatever is necessary even though it feels non-urgent.

Total concentration and complete lack of inhibition bring beauty and sacredness

Certain aspects of life are immediate and inescapable, such as our need for food and warmth. Because they are unavoidable requirements, they serve as the base-line foundation of all we do. Whether we do it ourselves, or we interact with another, someone has to prepare our firewood.

At times we may be reluctant to engage with the nuts and bolts of daily life, and so often we use our first surplus to get others to do practical things for us. Yet there is incomparable benefit to be gained from such work. Our ability to cope with crises so often depends upon the personal qualities that grow through simple tasks.

Great satisfaction is to be gained when we learn how to use basic skills and materials – real happiness is in having a spirited enthusiasm in the mundane. We may seek and find pleasure in a casual, inconsequential social life yet to find a deeper joy we must invest ourselves thoroughly in some activity that is both absorbing and real.

We see complete lack of inhibition so rarely in adults – yet we cannot half-heartedly fell a tree. It requires a blend of two opposing attributes of mastery – passion and concentration. When these are operating simultaneously we move into another dimension of being in which breakthrough occurs both externally and internally. Sometimes life is dangerous and requires our full attention.

There is great beauty, and a type of earthy sacredness, when what we are doing is absolutely full-on – especially when it requires total focus and is immediately useful. We are thus brought into the here and now, the location of reality, whose essential beauty and sacredness are then revealed to us.

Very often we seem to be engaged in a lesser reality – chopping wood – when at another level of awareness we are in fact serving a much higher purpose – earthy prayerfulness. When this occurs, so that what serves the physical also serves spirit, we are well-positioned in life. If we see these tasks as hard or unrewarding then we lack imagination or wisdom.

It is useful to place ourselves where our creature comforts are not all available at the push of a button so that we are forced to engage with life at the immediate physical level. This is grounding; it puts us in touch with what is real, and has immediate implications upon our sense of wellness and relatedness to everything else.

AQUARIUS 29

BUTTERFLY, EMERGING FROM A CHRYSALIS

(EMANATION)

RUDHYAR: A BUTTERFLY EMERGING FROM A CHRYSALIS

SPIRITUAL INITIATION TO A HIGHER LEVEL OF BEING

A seeker typically progresses in small steps but occasionally has a major shift

There is much knowledge to be gained in normal life for the spiritual aspirant but it is not enough to take us the whole way. To master the circle of life, with its cycles and directed evolutionary changes, is a necessary condition but it is not sufficient. We need to undertake the further step of commitment to a path of guidance where we are shown what otherwise we could not see by ourselves. Spiritual initiation is a particular event that occurs between a guide and a disciple which involves sacredness, vows and a fundamental shift of perspective. It has a magical quality and an alchemical effect – the disciple is transformed on the inner planes and so undergoes a metamorphosis.

The wonder of Creation is continually being reborn

There is a voracious appetite for experience, an insatiable well of curiosity for knowledge, and a constant mental yearning to get to the bottom of things. This propels individuals to seek answers to inner questions.

Mind is the cornerstone of humanity's supremacy on earth, and we invest hugely in the intellect in order to develop and maintain our self-assurance. This is required to function with an effective certainty of purpose.

What springs forth spontaneously, in response to persistent questing for knowledge, is an emanation of new ideas. Each one is like a butterfly in its ephemeral transience. Some of these ideas trickle forward and, without the force to survive, are lost; others grow like streams that become rivers feeding into the ocean of humanity's collective conception of existence.

The root of this activity is the elemental self-regeneration of mind. At a personal level and at the universal level, the mind needs to go through a process of constant renewal in order to purify itself – so that its outpourings are sparkling and clear.

We have to learn and understand that somehow the degenerative aspect of mentality – to be sluggish, lazy and crystallised into hard opinion, staunch belief and unwillingness to learn – can be overcome. Pushing away from such dysfunction to affirm our faith in life's promise, we awaken a more fluid way of creative thinking.

There is then the sense of continually being reborn – to an even greater expanse of awareness that has the eagerness of emergent new life – with a thirst to take in every scrap of knowledge from all perspectives.

We are all co-creating Creation in each moment. The feeling we get when we remember this – and fervently participate with it – is a blend of incomparable keenness, wonder and amazement.

AQUARIUS 30

THE FIELD OF ARDATH IN BLOOM

(CONTINUITY)

RUDHYAR: DEEPLY BOOTED IN THE PAST OF A VERY ANCIENT CULTURE, A SPIRITUAL BROTHERHOOD IN WHICH MANY INDIVIDUAL MINDS ARE MERGED INTO THE GLOWING LIGHT OF A UNANIMOUS CONSCIOUSNESS IS REVEALED TO ONE WHO HAS EMERGED SUCCESSFULLY FROM HIS METAMORPHOSIS

VISION OF THE UNIVERSE AS A POINT OF RADIANT LIGHT

Seers observe reality as a phenomenon of light without individualised form

Sufis teach of Unity and Diversity. The One manifests as the many, and the many form the One. This relationship is mirrored whenever any spiritual group finds itself able to function as a unified entity. For example in a sacred dance circle, each dancer individually adds a unique input to the whole and has their own personal experience, yet to an observer the circle is a unit that radiates light as a whole. When the circle is comprised of initiates, for example in a Sufi sema, the power of light is extraordinary as each is aware of the whole and their own individual part simultaneously; both aspects of reality – the wave and the particle – are grasped into consciousness.

Everyone may count on the inherent friendliness of the universe

The Field of Ardath is a mystical meadow of ancient Babylon; in its great beauty and peacefulness it stands as an ageless and special repudiation to modern life. Certain qualities make up the continuity of what life really is – these are unchangeable throughout eternity, and celebrated as the highest aspirations we have.

There is a transcendent integrity within Nature itself, unrivalled and almost universally acknowledged, which reminds us of a way of being that is free of distortion, and inherently beautiful. And, although we so easily forget, we have that within ourselves too.

This impeccable natural grace not only inspires us to seek out a spiritual meaning to life, it also suggests that everyone may count on the inherent friendliness of the universe. Despite appearances, and somewhat counter-intuitively, the world actually is a safe place to be for those who expect to be treated kindly.

One who accepts this gift from Nature somehow in turn feels that they should live so that any reliance placed upon them is both possible and inviting. It is an aspect of our expectation of a friendly universe that we actively want to help others – because we enjoy doing so.

In consequence, our destiny is inclined towards endowing us with the fruits of our good rather than bad works. It could be seen as a reward – but usually it is felt as simple, yet predictable, good fortune.

This is the image of self-illumination through service to others, and implies the continuity that certainly exists between Nature and humanity. Though robust and very demanding, Nature is essentially kind – and so are we.

Ultimately, the individual must rely on the world in which he finds himself. This reliance is experienced as the normal, predictable, and fair response we get from life. It centres on taking thoughtful responsibility for our actions – in clear distinction from the simpleton's fairy-story fantasy lifestyle, which involves depending upon others to feed and clothe them.

PISCES 1 – 5

HARMONISATION

Alone in meditation we can feel very spiritual and good – it's easy – but can we interact with others and still keep our sense of sacredness, feeling unafraid and willing to share? In the market place we are both blessed and threatened by others' greed, and indeed our own, and it is a central part of our spiritual journey to find a balanced approach. Even though the overarching cultural message we offer the world is at core an indestructible archetype, when we look at the bigger collective picture no individual counts for very much. When strangers interact the risk is stronger of confusion and the resultant distrust so it is very helpful to remember our spiritual commitment even when at work and in the supermarket.

Life is all about dynamism and balance – because movement requires the waveform of coming and going; vibration is exactly this. Philanthropy and selfishness, spiritual and physical, divergence and convergence – we give these things separate names as though they were separate things. But they are not; they are polarised aspects of the same thing, and harmonizing with events and surroundings depends upon understanding the need to equalise these opposites in a natural, flowing way.

To find out how to bring harmony to any potentially conflicted situation, we need to tune in to both sides without preference or judgement. We all have plenty of opportunities to practise this – in the market place and at home, with large groups and in family units. It takes a certain ability to hold emotional tension – where two sides are vying for empathy – without needing to become resolute either way. Sometimes two sharp attitudes can only be brought to softness by a third agency, and then all three positions are improved.

PISCES 1

A PUBLIC MARKET

(COMMERCE)

RUDHYAR: IN A CROWDED MARKETPLACE FARMERS DISPLAY A GREAT VARIETY OF PRODUCTS

HEALTHY EXCHANGE

Society provides security and a set of values, it also provides for increases of abundance

We can do nothing without cooperative interaction of some kind. We breathe, eat and feel safe from many dangers all because we are part of a complex interactive involvement with other living beings. On a very simple level we are all able to trade our surpluses with someone else's so that both parties are enriched. When commerce is properly managed then abundance and trust can grow and thereby reduce fear and the risk of conflict.

Commerce is an arrangement of reciprocal benefit that makes conflict less likely

A public market is a place of commerce, where people interact for mutual benefit without any need to enjoy each other's company or agree with each other's point of view. Although the exchanges are competitive, they are normally diplomatic and fair because the longer picture is in sight – and fair trade now leads to more trade in future. Wars are avoided and ended so that commerce can continue; therefore it represents the full maturity of humanity's social estate.

The common ideals of community life are here given everyday manifestation – what is bought and sold speaks of the current needs, aspirations, whims and fancies of this culture. It occurs through the willing participation of all members because everyone has to do their part for a market to function well.

The underlying emphasis is placed clearly on group integrity – which in turn facilitates each individual in their own special pattern of needs and wants.

The real intensity of effort is directed towards our own ends of course, and yet without having awareness of the purposes of others, we simply cannot expect to succeed. This is illustrative of reflexive self-consciousness, where our personal best interests, and even spiritual evolution, require us to tune in to the viewpoints of our fellows.

Ambition has its effective refinement here. Commerce elegantly combines a consistent generosity of understanding towards the practical aims of others, together with an entirely reasonable attitude of self-service. This formula optimises the realisation of both our own personal vision, and that of others'.

As a result of understanding and relating well to this, we can develop exceptional capacity for organizing the converging interests of many people in a practical arrangement of reciprocal benefit. This ability places us at or near the centre of power, where the policy decisions are made to optimise society's course of progression.

If these policies are not truly reciprocal, there arises a complete insensibility to any over-all welfare, and the degenerative implications of greed and exploitation. The consumerist philosophy of the modern era shows how this can lead to serious problems on a global scale.

PISCES 2

SQUIRREL HIDING FROM HUNTERS

(CAUTION)

RUDHYAR: A SQUIRREL HIDING FROM HUNTERS

REASONABLE CAUTION

The dangers of life come from our fellow man as well as from Nature

Without a high degree of trust and intimacy such as exists for example in tribal communities, there is always the real threat of aggression in the world. The appropriate response to this is neither fear nor blind faith, it is caution. The Sufis say 'trust in God but also tie your camel'.

When risk exceeds potential gain, it is wise to be very cautious

Fear wears many faces and is mostly born out of psychological imbalances; it is therefore unhelpful and neurotic where its expression is self-debasing timidity. However, with the light of intelligence, fear becomes caution and is a reasonable strategy for the maintenance of self-interest.

Sometimes it takes courage to refuse to engage in certain activities, and this is appropriate when the risk exceeds the potential gain. A few nuts, however important, are insufficient incentive for the squirrel to expose itself to the hunter's gun.

Such an uncompromising loyalty to self-interest focuses enduring values into a communal system that binds us together with others who share these values. Our hopes and fears are equally significant in creating our tribe mentality, the early expression of civilisation.

As with any species, humanity is tested as to whether it can collectively demonstrate sufficient survival skills. Good judgement is such a skill, and our survival is contingent upon it; we need to do the right thing as a group.

Humanity's gift is that of free will, so therefore its test is whether, by the application of good judgement, it is thought wise to do this, or to do that. Then actions follow conscious decision rather than instinctual reactions.

Feedback – as to whether our judgement has been sound as a long term policy – ultimately takes the form of survival and abundance, or even extinction – the threat of which comes as a dire warning.

From this rather stark process is evolved the only true independence of spirit, which will enable us to know what spirit is. This is God consciousness, and is the final mystery that can show us not only how to survive but why. The light is unknowable without the dark – so trust is born out of fear, and never without it. But rather than permit degenerate non-specific fear to rule us, we need to bring the light of consciousness to the equation.

PISCES 3

A PETRIFIED FOREST

(SURVIVAL)

RUDHYAR: PETRIFIED TREE TRUNKS LIE BROKEN ON DESERT SAND

LONG TERM REACH OF SOCIAL MOVEMENTS

Records exist of social events that occurred so long ago; what is important endures

If we look at historical, or especially geological, periods of time as individuals typically we are rather unimpressive. And yet collectively we co-crate our culture and participate in getting that culture to make its mark upon its time and place. Thousands of years later there are still enough clues from which we can infer the essential aspects of ancient cultures. This shows that it is impossible completely to destroy the effects of something that has once had life.

Standing firm or projecting forward – do we fear or do we trust?

The image is of something dead that once was living. We tend to clench up against change, in a futile attempt to turn to stone that which eternally must be cyclical by nature. Security is not found by resisting the dynamic forces of life; if change seems threatening it is because we have come to depend upon that which is not dependable.

In every situation, we are required to make a contribution, even if only by witnessing. Otherwise, we are in fact an obstacle, immobilised into a superficial stone-clad reality.

We need to blend in with the current circumstances we encounter so that we add to the resonance of the moment. In this way we become a creative part of the melody that eternally sounds throughout the cosmos.

Our best survival strategy is to develop a sense of certainty about what we find right and wrong as life strategies. This certainty derives from having and applying a steady orientation of a strong mind towards conscious knowledge.

Real power comes from this. As much as we have to accommodate the changes, we also have to stand firm and project forward a steadfast, clear motivation.

In every moment, throughout eternity, we are asked to adapt or to stand firm, and we must answer this call given no certainty about right or wrong, except that which we have discovered for ourselves.

This ambiguity is either intimidating or liberating. That is the essence choice in life – do we fear or do we trust?

PISCES 4

HEAVY TRAFFIC ON A NARROW ISTHMUS

(CONVERGENCE)

RUDHYAR: HEAVY CAR TRAFFIC ON A NARROW ISTHMUS LINKING TWO SEASHORE RESORTS

INTERACTIVITY BETWEEN MANY PEOPLE

Penalties of heavy traffic are encountered when a network gets too large

The complexity of social interaction that creates a culture depends upon the exchange of goods and services, ideas and knowledge; this goes hand in glove with complex movement patterns, which are the traffic of these exchanges. This traffic is a network that carries innumerable resources and journeys in a confusing, potentially tangled web. The tangles can become very frustrating and therefore potentially dangerous at times, so we learn the need to conduct our communications and exchanges with some care.

There is an elegant convergence of interests between all participants in any event

The restrictions imposed by physical existence inevitably force us to squeeze ourselves into a tight space sometimes – as cars do when passing through a bottleneck. Both the individual and the community are therefore required to develop a high level of discipline to cope with this particular expression of the hard reality of life.

This is clearly dramatised in everyday affairs, as vast populations rush about, having to accommodate everyone else, and come to terms with the need for imposed and self-accepted constraints.

Ultimately, however, there are no restrictions on how we relate. Through the intensity of convergence of interests and aspirations, we come to connect with whoever we need to in order to express our desires, values and qualities.

Each of us has their particular ways and special skills in organising the great complexity of our own unique set of interactions – so that we make the best use of our time and resources. We see the myriad patterns of transient enterprise in our own unique way – and by recognising the order within the patterns, we can manage our lives to best advantage.

Nothing can occur that we cannot influence and shape. It is so very important to know that.

Some people choose not to see how to fit what they want with what is around. This is folly; it is poor strategy – their stubborn blindness is degenerate.

What works for the individual, works for the community and vice versa. It must be so for the convenience and encouragement of self-development and the establishment of a well-integrated society. There is an elegant convergence of interests between all appropriate participants in any event.

PISCES 5

A CHURCH BAZAAR

(BENEFIT)

RUDHYAR: A CHURCH BAZAAR

BRINGING SACREDNESS AND CONSCIENCE TO THE MARKETPLACE

Money can be managed without the poison of greed

Since commerce often involves money the likelihood of greed is stronger. It is much easier to store surpluses of coin than food. By bringing a spiritual focus to such mundane transactions we can remind ourselves that sacredness can be found in all things, and then we are less at risk of losing ourselves to our shadow side.

Our endeavours benefit by cultivating new contacts and consolidating old allegiances

A community thrives through its institutions and social events. It draws together people whose important loyalties are enacted through their participation in these shared responsibilities and activities. This is where we meet our neighbours, and both celebrate and discover friendship. The connecting is unremarkable yet it gives us all a chance to enjoy not only the warmth of fellowship, but also the pyramiding powers of accomplishment.

Society organises itself for the general wellbeing of its contributing members, and each of us has an innate ability to capitalise upon the enduring allegiances that develop within that.

We gain as much benefit by what we give as what we receive; philanthropy is thus sustained. We are wise to be open and willing, in the knowledge that it is sensible to give when we can afford to give.

The conception of this symbol lies beneath the surface – we need to understand the mystery that there is always a great deal more going on with such simple matters than perhaps is apparent. Something as simple and unglamorous as a church bazaar can be the instrument through which individuals apply real effort to make a contribution to human achievement, and to the enrichment of gentle, yet important contact with others.

Most people drift around as if in a haze and fail to notice what is actually going on around them. There is always more to see than we are seeing – there is opportunity in every encounter. It is crucial to be open to possibility if we want to make the most benefit of our potential, and this openness is expressed by a particular attitude of attention. We must enter situations expecting to acquire something new and exciting – and of course this expectation significantly increases the likelihood that we will.

We need to be careful not to exclude the less social types, and become smug and cliquey, because our best interests in the long term will be served by an all-embracing approach to connection.

Generally speaking, there is always more to life than we can ever imagine, so openness to new input is an essential ingredient towards optimising happiness and greater fulfilment.

PISCES 6 – 10

INTEGRATION

The path of mastery is by no means easy and safe; if we want easy and safe then we must put aside our individuality somewhat and conform to social disciplines and expectations. Choosing a path of no-compromise we can often feel early the winds of the future blowing and yet will be crucified for sounding out the wakeup call. That does not, and must not, stop us from exerting ourselves fully in pursuit of clear goals until we make it into the higher realms of life where spirituality and worldliness are indistinguishable.

It is necessary for us to take bite-sized morsels of reality – day by day, person by person, thought after thought, because normally we can only grasp the nature of things in small pieces. So we carve up our experiences into scenarios and chapters as though they stand alone – and yet from the higher perspective, all is one. In order to integrate the component parts into a composite whole, we have to relax the grasp of the mind and allow it to expand towards its integration within cosmic consciousness.

PISCES 6

OFFICERS ON DRESS PARADE

(DISCIPLINE)

RUDHYAR: A PARADE OF ARMY OFFICERS IN FULL DRESS

SUPPORT FOR COMMUNITY SERVICE

When we serve the needs of the group we may expect to receive its support

We receive benefits from being part of a group – a family, a friendship circle, a community, a nation or a species. Yet it comes at the price of significant obedience to controls and disciplines. Some involvement in some group is unavoidable and will inevitably generate a measure of friction or concession. Much of our life is moulded by the choices we make about how much friction we will tolerate in order not to be overly compromised.

Appearance is but the experimental exhibition of authenticity

Officers on a dress parade are showing off how well they have trained themselves to do something few of us could manage to do. This is indicative of an aspect of the human psyche that occasionally comes around – at times, we feel the need to stretch ourselves to the limit.

Dignity and protocol provide a rehearsal of group values. We wear uniforms as an acknowledgement of orderly adherence to community customs. To go shopping, on a picnic, to a funeral, to a dance – and all have their own pre-determined styles of dress and behaviour, coded for us to understand the background emotional condition we are expected to fit in with. The more intense the experience we want, the more seriously we take our look.

Most of this is entirely unconscious, and often even discussing it triggers a defensive reaction, yet it is generally understood that how we dress indicates our choice of what to take part in, and how seriously we want to engage. The one wearing sports clothes is looking for a certain type of emotional validation from others, which differs substantively from someone wearing black, or someone else dressed to kill.

Special privileges accrue to those who master this aspect of human experience, and these privileges are also ritualised – as titles, awards and *entrées* to the exclusive circles. This probably applies as much on the street as it does in corridors of power. To survive the pressure of such public attention requires exemplary self-discipline, because to stay at the top is even more difficult than to get there in the first place; others want your spot.

We invest in selfhood very carefully, and to stake our claim on the future we choose an image, and an assortment of opinions and behaviours, which are likely to be judged acceptable. This presentation is to serve the long-term purpose of our self-seeking ambition to live out all we can of the potentialities of life.

However, we must be careful not to accept as the real thing any legitimised, but rather unimaginative, attempts at the ideal experience. Titles, awards, public recognition and glamour are all shallow reflections of something deeper and more authentic that the essentially aristocratic soul strives to make clearly manifest in its incarnation. And if, at the top of the tree, we cannot tell the difference between these gestures and the real deal, then all of the straining to fit in will have been almost entirely wasted.

We find that the greater discipline is in resisting all the trappings, the rewards that appearances earn us. In the end we must learn to say No to glister and Yes only to gold.

PISCES 7

A CROSS LYING ON THE ROCKS

(CONSCIENCE)

RUDHYAR: ILLUMINED BY A SHAFT OF LIGHT, A LARGE CROSS LIES ON ROCKS SURROUNDED BY SEA MIST

STICKING UP FOR YOUR OWN PRINCIPLES

It is a special person who goes against collective will and ethos to be true to themselves

At the extreme end of the spectrum of 'compromise or irritate' any of us may stand firm in our self-determined position of authenticity; and yet if we do we will undergo some type of crucifixion. Society does not tolerate any extremely rebellious activity, so one is often attacked who refuses self-betrayal through excessive compromise. Nonetheless this very process accelerates the rebel's personal evolution.

Conscience reveals the intuitive aspect of faith

A cross lying on the rocks is a reference to the widespread common denial of spirituality in the modern era. According to reports, it was not always so – in previous times, humanity kept alive more of a sense of their higher aspect than has come to be the case in the age of Scientific Materialism.

This shows something of the utter timidity of self-interest that some people have sunk to. For those who have faith, it is self-evident that to lose it is to lose ourselves – and this is what has happened in recent history. The force of untruth in commerce and politics has reached unparalleled levels, which is having a profoundly destructive effect upon the human psyche – even to the point where many cannot even access their intuitive side of consciousness, wherein faith is found.

In order to enjoy good health on the psychological side, we need to be active in the cause of every standard or allegiance through which life is made worthwhile to us. This must surely feature our spiritual side – how could it not? How can we ignore something of such paramount consequence?

There is an advantage to be found in this sad story – that we are forcefully challenged to find a rugged independence of inner spirit and the courageous rejection of all compromise. It requires powerful faith to overcome general cynicism, so our faith becomes powerful.

We must listen to the stirring of an inner voice, which seeks to quicken the soul to remember the overriding necessities of its existence in physical form. To lose knowledge of this quiet voice is immeasurably poignant.

To be clear of conscience, it sometimes becomes appropriate to undertake the withdrawal from life in one aspect as means for re-grasping it in another. If the forces of the material world are often overwhelming, then we must step back. In this way, and perhaps no other, we can turn within, and we will find the more subtle side of our being – the inner self.

It is wholly unnecessary to accept the world as it is. To do so, as it entirely commonplace today, is a repudiation or neglect of our individual higher ideals. This level of capitulation is to be avoided at all cost – nothing is more important than to express our ideals in material life. If we allow conscience to lose its pristine condition, or worse, lose track of it completely, then we drift upon oceans of dark confusion as lost and vulnerable as a small sailboat at sea without its rudder.

PISCES 8

GIRL BLOWING A BUGLE

(SUMMONS)

RUDHYAR: A GIRL BLOWING A BUGLE

HERALDING A NEW AGE

Times are changing fast and those of us who can see this can announce it to others

The rebel often serves the needs of the community far more than the sheep. Groups are inclined to degenerate quickly from their first position of being a springboard or vehicle for new initiatives, and they are subject to entropy and sclerosis without the vibrant innovative input that the rebel can offer. Always there is something new on its way, always a group must adapt to that, and always there is the first intuitive persons to sense the coming changes. They blow their bugles even though few will want to listen to the herald-sound of the future.

Are we invited to emergent joy or commanded to unwelcome constraint?

People form groups with regimented structures and clear lines of command that define what are acceptable expressions of self. This serves the group purpose well, but does not promote the expansion of individuality; in fact we have to be careful not to take on the very attitude of collective authority and become officious ourselves.

The bugle summons us – is this invitation or command? We are perhaps more likely to respond willingly to a girl's summons, which seems less compelling. Of course, it is understood that we must connect with others, and that such involvement will inevitably evolve terms of reference for the exchanges that occur – both socially and impersonally – and there will be rules, or at least guidelines, by which to interact.

Included within this process of forming community is the need for each person to find their place and define their values and preferences within their special role. Some blow the bugles, others are summoned.

It is inevitable and healthy that there is friction inherent within this process of community evolution. Everyone will challenge; everyone will be challenged – and this conflict is as good and useful as is the grit that oysters are said to need to produce their most beautiful expression.

Without it, we would become sluggish and live a degenerate life. We have to stay alert if we live constantly surrounded by imposed discipline – in particular we need to be awake to opportunities for us to grow, and express who we are. This alertness is a supportive quality.

Our very participation within the group begets social responsibility. We are required to discharge our community duties to the accepted level. Any sense we may have of not doing so registers as an uneasy conscience, even if we cleverly escape the imposition of discipline and justice. Although the lower self may not find it too disturbing to cheat the system, the soul always wants to do the right thing.

There is a dynamic balance to all things, so too within the relationship between self and community. If we are forced to squeeze ourselves into a soul-destroying regime, then the powerful urge towards self-expression will eventually dominate. There is a continual cycle to be embraced – the swing between freedom and involvement. Without some involvement in community and its constraints, life lacks stability and even meaning; whereas with too much constraint, we feel no emergent joy.

PISCES 9

A JOCKEY

(PRACTICE)

RUDHYAR: A JOCKEY SPURS HIS HORSE, INTENT ON OUT-DISTANCING HIS RIVALS

SPUR TO ATTAINMENT

It takes drive, energy, skill and determination to succeed

One aspect of life is the urgency and drive to success that a jockey demonstrates. At times we must pull out all the stops and focus every ounce of energy in a determined way to achieve our goals at all costs. Without such an occasional, intense spurring-to-action we would slowly lose vitality and purpose.

To establish ourselves takes application and commitment

Jockeys train hard and keep to a rigorous dietary discipline in order to maintain a peak of fitness for their work. Any top practitioner does – musicians, sportswomen, singers and so on. Practice is what keeps us in form.

Each of us potentially has a spectacular gift for rising to the occasion. It takes will to do the necessary preparatory work, and this comes from motivation. Often this drive is found because we simply want to celebrate and enjoy our talents to their fullest capacity.

Rather than misusing our resources and potentiality – for example by witless gambling on horse racing, trying to get something for nothing – we can choose to apply ourselves fully towards something that will bring the important feeling of self-fulfilment.

There are inevitably disappointments, and even penalties, for any failure to push the capabilities of self to the limit, since insolvency of achievement is seen by our community as quite an unattractive quality. We find that actually it is only through thoroughly consistent performance of skills that we establish respect among our fellows and feel the reassurance of being worth our position.

As our abilities develop towards excellence, we are increasingly called upon to exhibit them successfully. So the more we practise, the more we need to practise. Thus it is seen that achievement is not an event – it is a lifestyle – and usually this demands that we allocate time and funds to support our clear intention to reach a goal.

This image of a jockey speaks to us of the concern we must have for the exertions and challenges of everyday experience. Real, sustained effort is unavoidable if we want to enjoy success on any level – the background entropy of existence demands that constantly we work to improve ourselves or else we will certainly degenerate.

In any true revelation of ourselves, our eagerness must show through. We demonstrate our commitment to a full and satisfying life through some activity, which we take to the fullest degree of completion and expression only as we strive and struggle.

PISCES 10

AN AVIATOR IN THE CLOUDS

(OBSERVATION)

RUDHYAR: AN AVIATOR PURSUES HIS JOURNEY, FLYING THROUGH GROUND-OBSCURING CLOUDS

HIGHEST LEVELS OF ACHIEVEMENT

Few go beyond levels of normal excellence to master their chosen craft and skill-set

The many tend to find a minimalist approach to community service, offering as little back as possible, begrudging their taxes and avoiding volunteering; others 'do their bit' and try to behave responsibly. The very few are intent on mastery and are self-directed to do whatever needs to be done immediately and competently as a way of life. These are the people who discover that life offers whole dimension unknown to the rest. Living in this dimension is incomparably more profound and satisfying. It is, in essence, nothing more than an attitude of mind, yet it is enough to smooth one's path and open unimaginable opportunities.

Explorations into transcendental consciousness offer breakthroughs of perception

The physical location we take up has an important effect upon perception. If we were to climb to a hilltop, or even visit a remote island, and contemplate our busy lives from afar, we would see things differently. The aviator's viewpoint offers a breakthrough in consciousness – as witnessed by astronauts returning to Earth.

The power of observation is enhanced by depth and breadth of perception. Inner and outer realms of life are each brought to a more effective reality when both are consulted.

If we remember to bring this approach into our normal lives, then we can examine any special complex of human affairs with a consistent thoroughness of overview. We then understand more about how people feel, how they see things, what ramifications are likely, and what can be done to optimise our expectations.

Humanity has a genius for exploration – we are curious and courageous. When we bring this playful attitude of mind to bear upon the problems of daily life, we create endless hypotheses for solution. In fact problems are often welcomed in order to give our creative genius the stimulus it so enjoys.

We rise above limitations – we think out of the box – when we look for explanations above and beyond our typical, historical patterns of action. On the face of it, lacking wings, humans could not fly – yet someone refused the old way of thinking and dreamed. The whole process of planning and execution is transformed by the one with their head in the clouds.

If we are to avoid irresponsible isolationism and unrealistic otherworldliness, then it is better to think of this rather unworldly dreamlike state more as an excursion than a lifestyle.

The transcendental aspect of reality offers greater powers of comprehension for those with the vision to attain to these higher states of awareness. We can, if we choose to do so, and learn how all rise above the patterns of conditioned mind, and taste something of absolute freedom.

PISCES 11 – 15

DEVOTION

Walking to the culmination of our journey to realisation we are by no means in a safe and relaxed environment or phase of life. As a necessary, but not guaranteed sufficient, condition for success we must find our absolute best version of ourselves. It also demands that we associate in a disciplined, hierarchical way with realised masters, who examine us for faults – so that we can deal with them resolutely and finally. There is little or no chance for full realisation for us unless we develop iron will and magical charm since we will need these qualities to overcome challenges that we have always before found insurmountable.

A balance is to be found between the gentle, careful exposition of beauty and grace – and passionate, adventurous trust in our ups and downs of feelings. It is aesthetically pleasing and intuitively right that what works well in the long-term is both functional and tasteful. The goal is arrived at when there is no difference between self and God, when passion and consciousness are ever-present, and when all questions immediately dissolve into answers.

When we find alignment between our sense of self, and our sense of universality, then we have access to knowledge, and inevitably become an example that inspires others to follow or emulate us. Here, it is useful to convey the subtle point that the only thing of consequence is the aligning, which requires devotion to life, a constancy of approach towards the goal, with a high expectancy of reaching it. Students and associates will mistakenly believe that they need to follow the teacher, adopt the teachings and blindly accept that version of Ultimate Truth. This expression of devotion is false and leads the student down a cul de sac.

PISCES 11

MEN SEEKING ILLUMINATION

(DEDICATION)

RUDHYAR: MEN TRAVELLING A NARROW PATH, SEEKING ILLUMINATION

TAKING STEPS TO IMPROVE ONESELF

The majority seek comfort and pleasure while the seeker never stops moving forward

We can find teachers who are further advanced than we are if we fulfil four conditions of discipleship – purity of heart, mental awareness, emotional poise and spiritual self-determination. The advanced teachers can always awaken the light in us to a greater degree because there is no end to the journey, until we find ourselves not in any way different from God. Yet the path does not move; it is we who travel in order to find we have to seek. In metaphorical terms we have to 'walk on'.

Devotion – the condition for attainment – is alignment with our sense of Ultimate Reality

Divine Spirit in essence is its own matrix. In other words, that which gives it form is actually an aspect of itself. It is what it is because it only ever has pure intention, purity as its nature, and purity as its result.

The expression of this idea has given rise to scriptures, prophets, priests and teachers, and everything that arises out of these. Any attempt made by these agencies to describe purity is somewhat imperfect – of course, because if it were perfect it would be Purity itself, and beyond all the limitations added by the encumbrances of definition.

So, our religions, spiritual traditions, philosophies, laws and moral codes are all inevitably tainted. They speak as much to the needs of our imperfect hearts as they do to the cosmic realisation of the Source of all love. They are in fact the descriptive contours of the limits that define the stage of our spiritual evolution.

The emergence of humanity into the realm of experience is a work in progress. As a species, we have unlimited potentiality and the freedom to be and do whatever we have the will for. There is an examination process to enquire as to the extent of our commitment to a given line of evolutionary development. This is called dedication.

We find that dedication is a necessary and sufficient condition for high accomplishment. We also discover what it actually is – it is alignment with our personal sense of Ultimate Reality.

Were this principle to express itself in its distorted aspect, one would experience hypocrisy – behaviour at variance with one's beliefs and feelings. It is interesting to observe that no apology is due or appropriate whenever we are acting entirely within the integrity of our authentic position.

Since we are in alignment, nothing is essentially disturbing, and we can find a way to flow through the changes without much difficulty. We see buffeting as helpful evidence of the need for further refinement, nothing more.

PISCES 12

AN EXAMINATION OF INITIATES

(QUALIFICATION)

RUDHYAR: IN AN OCCULT BROTHERHOOD, NEWLY INITIATED MEMBERS ARE EXAMINED

EXAMINATION

We focus and are challenged to produce our best results in order to measure and improve

Advanced beings tend to be drawn into each other's company and then create a disciplined community to protect the atmosphere and conditions that support their being able to maintain a high level of attunement. The newly-initiated disciple, joining them, will be tested by this style of living and also examined by the elders. This established a process of both measurement and furtherment that is essential for discipleship.

Spiritual aspirations are tested – have we clear intention to serve the soul's ideals?

Life, especially a spiritual life, demands that we continue at all times to prove ourselves in full accordance with the claims we make.

So if we claim to be a seeker of immortal understandings, then certain choices and behaviours are appropriate; others are not. An initiate is someone who has made an irrevocable statement of intention to serve the soul's imperatives above those of the ego.

Self-dedication is a commitment to a set of values far removed from gross appetites, transient jealousies of fellows, and similar neurotic attitudes. Ultimately we reveal ourselves more through the finer potentialities we develop – our qualifications – to the point where we choose unhesitatingly and consistently to share them with others.

In each and every new situation of consequence, we are tested – this is what is meant as the examination of initiates. It is not imposed upon by others – it is attracted to us by our sincere seeking.

Ideals and spiritual aspirations are thought-forms, and they operate on the level of magnetism, pulling towards us both the rewards and the price of our involvement with the mysteries. If we pay the price – giving up our imperfections of character, we are given the rewards – emotional calmness and intellectual understanding.

Our qualification is a two-edged sword. We may detach ourselves from commonplace neediness for the emotional support of others, yet run the risk of embittered self-solicitude. We may also become advanced in knowledge, yet frustrated because we are unable to explain much of what we know to family and friends.

However, within us there arises an instinctive responsiveness to the highest expectation of everybody we meet, and we become concerned only in issues of real consequence – to the exclusion of trivial matters. This means a complete revision of our attitudes, and our circumstances – we may have to live on the very edges of normal society to maintain our freedom of perspectives and the constant availability to serve Spirit.

PISCES 13

A SWORD IN A MUSEUM

(EXAMPLE)

RUDHYAR: AN ANCIENT SWORD, USED IN MANY BATTLES, IS DISPLAYED IN A MUSEUM

SINGLE POINTED CERTAINTY OF PURPOSE

A sword directs our attention towards one and only one thing and so concentrates the will

There is no greater tool or weapon for the spiritual aspirant than the power of will. It sharpens the mind and impassions the thrust of projection forward; so will is often symbolised by a sword. Those whose path has shown remarkable determination to overcome obstacles develop an appropriate reputation and stand as an example courage for others to emulate

Tradition keeps alive the wisdom of the ages

Through the consistent practice of self-discipline, human personality can develop into something of real substance. Such gravitas offers great personal power when in service to the commonly held traditional ideals of the community.

In times of uncertainty, when confusion clouds the minds and hearts of less serious people, such a personality is an important counter-balance to collective emotionality. A slow, serious, heavyweight character settles turbulence and encourages caution and practicality; they set a good example.

As a wave typifies an ocean, so a single exemplary scene, person or object can illustrate the distinguishing qualities of the time and place in which it featured. The museum sword is a surviving influence from a figure from history – someone who became a central reference point for a particular moment in the unfolding of major events.

Somewhat mysteriously, yet repeatedly throughout the centuries, the spirit of a community finds renewed embodiment in contemporary individuals. Self-selected, these become the unlikely heroes of the hour when there arises a moment of crisis. They stand when others do not.

The wisdom of the ages is thus reborn in today's world to cope with today's challenges, and is projected into the future by today's interpretations as the current enactment of long-standing principles. This is how a living tradition keeps alive.

There is no greater encouragement to rouse the spirit of a reluctant hero than to know that they serve a principle dignified by historical significance – and that it is for them to hold alive this tradition.

When push comes to shove and our ideals are tested, then we must choose to put aside personal issues and make certain that we do the right thing. We must avoid any temptation, rather preposterously, to show ourselves as having merit in epic proportions – and concentrate our will upon the nobler task of becoming an example for those who serve at a later time.

PISCES 14

A LADY IN A FOX FUR

(TASTEFULNESS)

RUDHYAR: A LADY WRAPPED IN A LARGE STOLE OF FOX FUR

USING GLAMOUR AS A SHIELD

The real purpose is not revealed by their glamour but the real person is

Glamour is employed by an initiate as a subtle protective disguise; it is far better to avoid conflict using strategy and device than to attract or precipitate the collision of wills. The range of glamours is much more than pretty clothes and face paint – sexual allure and physical beauty – but includes also the spells of knowledge, sharp intellect, athleticism and also more self-deprecating attitudes like victimhood, false humility and humble, self-righteous service. Anything that tells a story and disguises the full facts is a glamour and, though useful, is a little risky to exercise since it so very often carries the burden of self-deception.

Style shapes personal outcomes by articulating membership of a distinct circle of influence

Integrity is deepened as we learn never to surrender our willingness to demonstrate the authentic uniqueness of who we are, what we feel and what we hold to be true.

A lady in a fox fur is symbolic of the dynamic freedom of expression with which everyday custom endows us, dramatised here by individual's effective desire – she wants to be in style, and openly and honestly to articulate the opinions she holds, even those of momentary importance.

Tastefulness is the entirely subjective expression of our value judgements about style. In some ways we can see that there is little lasting consequence in our choice of clothes and responses to fashion. Yet on a deeper level, such expressions are indicators of profound questions of morality, equality, income distribution, power and beauty – things that shape humanity's evolution. Taste actually adds its touch to influence all reality.

We are strengthened in our cultural group through whatever we are able to possess or do and think in common, this is our bonding; this could also be our bondage. We unite with others who wear fox furs, yet we have no real option but to carry on wearing them if we want to continue to belong to that set.

High accomplishment is often achieved through demonstrating of our assets in the best possible light. We project our inner qualities and potential into a cautious world, making a statement of our worth through our outer appearances. If the lady is stylish, then she is part of the elite circle and carries clout.

However, followers of fashion become lost in the waves, unless they are able also to win some creative content to better their own experience. In the wash of their blind obedience to agreed standards – about inconsequential mechanisms of building the descriptive contours of the in crowd – they tend to surrender important aspects of individuality.

Another danger with this degree is in amoral opportunism. What is acquired, through nothing more than glamour, eventually dissolves. The expression of tastefulness is meant to grace something more substantial within, rather than veiling reality with the superficiality of form.

PISCES 15

AN OFFICER PREPARING TO DRILL HIS MEN

(PRECISENESS)

RUDHYAR: OFFICER INSTRUCTING HIS MEN BEFORE A SIMULATED ASSAULT UNDER BARRAGE OF LIVE SHELLS

REHEARSING HOW TO USE POWER

Neither recklessness nor fearfulness is appropriate when power is at play

Before being able to close any cycle in life fully, there must be an evaluation of what has occurred, a balancing of accounts and the facing of karma. When this is externalised into life events, we must expect to encounter some significant danger, a danger that has so far been perpetually and forever avoided. By anticipating this we can make careful arrangements, planning and equipping ourselves as best we can for the certainty of immense challenge. It is better to take instruction and focus very clearly before we encounter our nemesis.

Making the best of things, we bring meaning and even adventure to common situations

An officer preparing to drill his men is an image of an outer world event that seems to lack meaning. Yet of course, its meaning lies in the purpose it serves – in this case to develop preciseness. In every life situation, things are exactly as they are – and we have to deal with that reality precisely as it is, rather than how we would have it to be. We must trust that it is exactly how it needs to be for our best purposes at this moment.

There is observed in many people a self-betraying desire for a hierarchy of allegiance in which the self is lost – blindly and completely given over to an external authority. Soldiers are examples of this.

Most often this leads to an uninspiring drudgery, because it is not the creative self that determines how things unfold, but an unfeeling institutional power device. The challenge then is to make the best of the situations from which there is no immediate extrication.

Everyday life becomes superficial with its dismissal of all responsibility of consequence. So we need to take on duties and give them as much significance as possible. If we are shining shoes or peeling potatoes, then that is what we are doing, so we must give it our very best effort.

Anyone still alive with spirit will experience a determination to participate in some reality of more enduring importance, and therefore make a real attempt genuinely to find importance in everything. This teaching is underlined strongly in Zen.

The lesson here is that living is vital only to the extent that each individual decides to motivate themselves. Sometimes the outer circumstances of life are constrained, so we need to concentrate more on matters of inner importance, such as our approach to the outer world, however it may currently be for us.

With such an attitude, we can develop a real gift for bringing genuine efficiency and real adventure to common objectives.

PISCES 16 – 20

SPIRITUALITY

Much speculation exists about the qualities of the Creator, who is said to be all-powerful, all-knowing and the perfection of love. This is for the individual to decide, yet one thing is not debatable at all – there is a truism to notice – above all else the Creator is surely creative. We find that the creative moment is sacredness and whether this is experienced quietly alone or on public display, the feeling of tuning in to Divine Inspiration is the most special event that we encounter. As we experience this more and more, so within us develops the will to make our own statement to the world and try to encourage others to affirm it too, so that the message of God survives and spreads. In one real sense this is our life purpose until such time as we leave this dark place and return to the home of the soul.

We are all summoned to the house of God, and encouraged to practise the means by which to respond to the call. So many paths have been walked on this journey, all different and yet basically the same. This is because individuality is a claim to create its unique way, and yet will be surrendered when the universal pattern is finally revealed. There are particular processes to learn, yet we are free to interpret and express these according to our own evolutionary path. In the end, all our differences are allowed to dissolve – and knowing this is the final mystery. Ultimate knowledge – whether viewed as the Self, examining God, or God examining Self – is neither a gift nor a reward – paradoxically neither yet both. Whatever path we walk, it is the path to God; revelation requires a path – but any will do. Our encounters are either tests of ingenuity or celebrations of position, according to our station and approach, since whether we find our circumstances difficult or joyful is a matter of mind, not phenomena. As we evolve our ability to manage our affairs – however vast and complex – we somehow learn that we can never manage them as well as they can manage themselves.

PISCES 16

THE FLOW OF INSPIRATION

(INGENUITY)

RUDHYAR: IN THE QUIET OF HIS STUDY A CREATIVE INDIVIDUAL EXPERIENCES A FLOW OF INSPIRATION

FINDING GRACE IN STILLNESS

An important part of our life practice is to find inner peace

Any creative person is at the point of connectedness between the hidden source of inspiration and their immediate time and place. Each moment has its own unique qualities, scenarios and needs and an inspiration can be found by those who have learned how to tune in to the quietness that surrounds us all always. Often called the muse, or spirit guides, or angels, there is some aware force of life that directs itself to address the questions of the moment in original ways. This can only happen when we have faith, the strength of character to make a new statement in the world, and the ability to concentrate and be quiet.

Spirituality must meet real problems as well as imagined ones

With the development of civilisation came humanity's attempts to form relationship with greater, unseen forces – this is the birth of human spirituality. To early inhabitants of the planet, survival issues made it essential that spiritual power had practical potentiality. Indeed if our spirituality does not serve us in real terms, then what is it for? In fact, what is it, except the projection of personal fantasy?

Even today, everyday living throws up critical questions that we find we need to address in such a way that both expediency and principle are considered carefully – and, if possible, reconciled. Our spirituality must meet real problems as well as imagined ones. Only the smallest minority of people who consider themselves spiritual are willing and capable of finding alignment between the seen and unseen realms. For these it is intuitively obvious that, without such alignment, there is certain to be imperfection of understanding in both worlds.

The world is a cornucopia – there are unlimited resources available for our enjoyment, and they motivate us towards the realisation of the potential inner condition of spiritual abundance.

In order to reach this rich harvest, it is entirely necessary to put to the test our skills, and the knowledge we have gained through our experiences. We learn to welcome such challenges because, without them, we could not expand the expression of self to its fullest potential.

Without exception everyone can draw deep upon the wellspring of inspiration that flows unceasingly from the unseen realms into our world. This is spirituality in action, the pinnacle of human accomplishment.

Maturity in an individual is evidenced by their conscious sensitivity to this ever-present phenomenon of the descent of light. There is a clear process, which can be learned through meditation and spiritual practice, for bringing down the light of spirit into human affairs. We need challenges so that we can rise to them, and we need to draw down the light of inspiration, so that we can deal with them.

Such awareness bestows an exceptional ability to meet anything that comes up with ingenuity, poise and imagination, although we do need to guard against hubris – disdaining others less clever or adroit. The proof that we have mastered this skill is that we are never-endingly finding ingenious ways to cope with life.

PISCES 17

AN EASTER PROMENADE

(CELEBRATION)

RUDHYAR: AN EASTER PARADE

INTENSIFICATION OF SPIRITUAL GRACE THROUGH CELEBRATION

The emotional aspect of spiritual practice is expanded through ritual and ceremony

In contrast to the individual's quiet approach to finding a heightened awareness the group's tends to be loud and celebratory. At various times of the year according to the cultural myth of our community, we are invited or even expected to participate in a demonstration of alignment. This is all the more powerful when this is done within a sacred context such as Easter's association with Christ and the renewal and rebirth principle.

The image we show the outer world characterises the inner self

At one end we have New Orleans's Mardi Gras, and at the other, various well-to-do Christians in their Sunday best – it's all show. Typical human beings have the propensity to define themselves in a communal setting – by how they dress, and how they behave, differently from the rest.

This is more than the satisfaction of our need for attention, and serves a real and important function by bringing into conscious awareness a clearly-defined and uniquely expressive self-image. In a way we are idealising ourselves by dressing up – and thus we gain insights about the ideal. The image we present towards the outer world characterises our inner, and more hidden, sense of self.

Unless our society allows us to celebrate ourselves as we choose to be, it is not our society. We need our idealised self-image accepted or we cannot realise it.

Variety and extremes of self-exhibition can often lack grace, even to the point of being ridiculous, yet they test our social environment, so they have genuine value. If we find that our Easter persona doesn't fit – then maybe our workaday personality doesn't either, and we need to find a better place, or way, to be.

Any urges we may have need to be projected into creating our future. Those denied by society will be refined and then accepted, or taken elsewhere where they can be celebrated – or at least accepted. In other words, whatever we feel we want to do is good at some place, at some time. Our path is to find that place and time, or at least to transmute the urge by questing.

This tireless process of self-refinement acts as an inspiration to others – those who reluctantly take on the repressive beliefs of a fearful community. They need to see a model of self-assertion in order, self-assertively, to become who they are.

To the wise, Easter speaks of rebirth rather than crucifixion. With grace, we are able to go against the processes of enforced conformity and be reborn into purity so that all parts of us are celebrated.

PISCES 18

A GIGANTIC TENT

(APPORTIONMENT)

RUDHYAR: IN A GIGANTIC TENT, VILLAGERS WITNESS A SPECTACULAR PERFORMANCE

PERFORMANCE IN PUBLIC

Sometimes our community, which at certain times focuses its attention on us alone

Alone we may well be satisfied with our own ideas and creative outpourings but if we want to attract a following we will need to put on some kind of public display, which is typically entertaining or spiritual and could be a circus or religious group for example – the kind that is suggested by a marquee. We cannot expect our message to gain validation and popularity, or even much attention, unless we are willing and capable enough to focus outwardly with the intention of self-exposition.

A conductor is needed to bring the orchestra into alignment

This is an image of the ability to assign the most effective resources to organise a specific outcome. Divergent capabilities are apportioned to meet the needs of complex situations by one with an exemplary knack at organisation – of their own attributes or others'.

Whenever we engage with others, we inevitably participate in a sharing of not only skills but risks, as we together serve a common cause.

It takes a person with a steadiness of perception to get an overall sense of the whole picture, without which no unification of effort can be achieved. Nothing of value is created without some degree of harmonisation, and a conductor is needed to bring the orchestra into alignment.

It is in moments of true excitement that the totality of life is brought to a single centre. The focus of all attention, of all the senses, is achieved in such rare moments of absolute intensity of being.

Such moments are gateways – vortices. The intensity, which offers such immediate, momentary entertainment, also thrusts us into the future with more vibrancy and a great deal more directedness, which can underwrite a richer path of life. Somehow we feel more inclined to put the world in order and have better insights about how to be better able to do so.

Taken too far, such confidence and over-enthusiasm can seem bombastic, and fuelled by delusions of grandeur.

Yet with the naivety that we associate with performers in a circus big top, such a show of skill and risk is nothing more than a healthy and entertaining demonstration of our highest aspirations.

PISCES 19

A MASTER INSTRUCTING HIS PUPIL

(ELUCIDATION)

RUDHYAR: A MASTER INSTRUCTING HIS DISCIPLE

TRANSMISSION

Knowledge is kept alive by passing on of information, understandings and materials

The functionality in our winning support for our ideas is an aspect of the Work. It is of individual worth to study, learn and grow yet there is a greater imperative – that the special knowledge must be invested in furtherance so that the line continues. There is a stream of spiritual awareness passed from teacher to student, and the more committed students become teachers and keep the tradition alive. Within Sufism this is called the silsila, known also as the transmission.

Teachers guide us to places in the psyche that we don't even know exist

A master instructing his pupil is an enduring image of the principle of elucidation – bringing clarity. Throughout the ages, knowledge has been passed down as one lucidly demonstrates to another special skills, understandings and codes of conduct.

Most people desire to live by the rule of the power-possessors – who propagate lies and half-truths to control the masses through popular concepts of empty knowledge – but the true student wants to avoid this at all costs. Therefore further study is needed, and this must be outside the mainstream educational system, and it must include both rational and non-rational aspects of the psyche so that true understanding is attained, rather than mere repetition of fact and opinion.

Personality is validated to the extent that it directs its own destiny, and this is only ever facilitated and expanded by furthering both our spiritual understandings and our worldly talents.

High executive ability evolves through gaining knowledge; this requires patient investigation – and the genuine psychological insights that come arise as much from understanding ourselves as our fellows.

Life entreats every individual to employ all their privileges and enjoy Nature's munificent bounty, and will always give every encouragement to the initiative of spirit by which they are led to so do. Our enterprising exploration of life's mysteries is therefore always supported, because knowledge desires to be known, as much as life desires to be lived.

Self-refinement is the process by which we gain greater understandings of ourselves. Through this it is possible to learn of any appropriate re-orientations currently indicated as useful shifts of perceptions or direction. It is very rare for this to be possible without guidance, because we are mostly in denial of our shadow side, and cannot see the imperfections of character that must necessarily be addressed if we are to progress fully.

Elucidation is essentially a symbol of unlimited potentiality. It arises out of the demand by human intelligence for a stake in any larger dimension they can imagine must exist in a world they have not yet opened up for themselves. We are drawn to our teachers so that they can guide us to places in the psyche that we don't yet even know exist – except for a vague feeling that '*surely they must?*'

PISCES 20

A TABLE SET FOR AN EVENING MEAL

(FAMILIARITY)

RUDHYAR: A TABLE SET FOR AN EVENING MEAL

HARVEST

We are nourished by whatever we can harvest from our labours and experiences

The soul's sojourn on earth puts it in touch with so many things which are not of its essence. It learns of suffering, of loss and disappointment, of frustration and failure, of sickness and of death. Yet these darker energies are of the Earth and at the end of the day the soul returns home and is guaranteed comfort and joy once again.

To feel and express gratitude is of major importance

This is an image of the normal satisfactions for which modern man seldom has to exert himself. Westerners have come a long way from the days where food and shelter were constant concerns that drew all of our energy.

A table set for an evening meal points not only to Nature's prodigality, but also to the full enjoyment of family, and the comforting sense of familiarity, through which these normal daily satisfactions unfold.

This applies not only to food, there is actually no end to what we can enlist for fulfilment of our desires – and everyone who discovers that finds a very relaxed and easy path to happiness. We can become familiar with every part of our wild and strange universe by awakening, within ourselves, the inner quality of familiarity, as a state of being.

The foolish indulge in a naive selfishness of ambition, coupled with a witless, groundless optimism – instead of a more appropriate and sustainable humble appreciation of the true blessings that each day brings, backed up by a reasonable level of gentle expectation.

We can achieve life's promise in nothing more than a very thorough expression of self-gratification, as long as we also remember constantly to feel and express gratitude towards the natural source of our wellbeing.

Nature offers a completely effective sensitivity to every passing need of humankind, and will provide for all our needs if we would only let it happen. The ability to let it is a skill that requires us to heal various imperfections in the psyche, which arose during our formative period and, until we address the matter, will continue to blight our easy enjoyment of life's abundance.

We must establish our instinct for revelation of our own potentials, by effectively dealing with the false threat of scarcity and loss. We need to attend to that, during the temporary lean periods, by repeatedly and decidedly affirming an expectation of coming bounty.

PISCES 21 – 25

DREAMING

The child within us senses hope and joy and trusts these feelings – and yet life has pressures and soon this innocent wisdom is covered up and all but lost. Then we need to be told what to do, and what is true, by potentially corrupt social and spiritual leaders – from parents to school teachers to politicians and priests. Interactions with people demand of us that we crystallise a strong, clear ego-statement to cope and explain our position. Yet that also becomes corrupted from egoism to egotism as we get hardened into the belief that our take on reality is more important than others'. If we really want to be free then we must rid ourselves of self-importance and rigid belief, a difficult task for most of us and impossible for some.

All the beauty, the love and the magnificence that we witness is ours; it is legitimate, and well-deserved self-love propelled into the world and mirrored back – the result of our magical dreaming. From this we understand that it is actually strategic to give away, because that sets up an inevitable cosmic responsibility to give back – the Cosmos itself owes a debt. Whatever we release is invested for us in Eternity as fidelity bonds.

So it is good to deal fully and finally with all matters arising. Whatever imperfections of life are thrown up, we need to deal with them to the point of our full satisfaction. It is much better to respond with love and understanding whenever we are abused – not disdainfully to excuse the culpable, but to atone for our own imperfections, which are now haunting us. We must assume that we deserve all that we get – so any difficulties that come to us are now seen as opportunities to recover previous lost ground. It is not even helpful to try to understand the whys and the wherefores – it's our fault and our reward, unconditionally. How we see it all is simply how we see it all – reward or penalty. Just by noticing what occurs, we grow in wisdom.

PISCES 21

LITTLE WHITE LAMB, CHILD AND CHINESE SERVANT

(TALENT)

RUDHYAR: UNDER WATCHFUL AND KIND EYE OF A CHINESE SERVANT, A GIRL FONDLES A LITTLE WHITE LAMB

TRAINING IN OPTIMISM

The soft touch and simple smile are powerful agencies through which we learn optimism

Before the mind gets involved in analysis and formulation of ides often there is a feeling-sense of what is unfolding. As we bring the mental aspect to bear upon our feelings, then what was single gets polarised and in that moment we opt for this or that. Some opt for hope, some for resignation, some are optimistic and some are fearful. A wise old Chinese oversees the child as she takes comfort and joy from the simple pleasure of a lamb's cuddliness; this is not trivial, it has huge implications. The child becomes more likely to expect and choose hope and joy because she has been properly trained in the skill by good parenting.

We weave the threads of life to form identity and vision

It perhaps requires an unusual degree of wisdom and trust to understand that life is a limitless field of talent for self-discovery.

The enigmatic image – a lamb, a child, a servant – shows the scattered spread of possibilities that can have little or no connectedness, unless the individual has the talent to 'join up the dots' and bring a measure of order to apparent chaos.

There has to be found a level of significance to bring together disparate aspects of life. Assured by the belief that all things are interconnected, the talented mind will seek and find connectedness. From this, our lives can be made meaningful and comprehensible.

Otherwise our experiences would be haphazard – unrelated to our principles and decisions, even to our ancestral and personal history – as if we lived in a vacuum, empty of context and order.

To bring about a noteworthy, special level of self-projection, we need to be of single focus – disregarding what has little consequence, ignoring whatever is out of alignment with our intentions, and disdaining distractions as we focus our dreams.

It is by this process that we weave together all the appropriate threads of our life experience into an integrated statement of identity and vision, within the context of the environment in which we have chosen to make into our place of being. The weaver is the magician – the one who makes things up out of whatever is available. Perhaps we imagine that this is a story of an Asian au pair taking care of a farmer's daughter, or perhaps a criminal conspiracy to import into Hong Kong illegal foodstuffs disguised as children's pets. We weave whatever we choose to imagine.

What would happen otherwise? Groping aimlessly through the mess of an unstructured life is hardly the behaviour of a person of dignity and conscience.

PISCES 22

MAN BRINGING DOWN NEW LAW FROM SINAI

(MANDATE)

RUDHYAR: A PROPHET CARRYING TABLETS OF THE NEW LAW WALKS DOWN THE SLOPES OF MOUNT SINAI

CODE OF CONDUCT

Our spiritual understandings need to be expressed finally in terms of behaviour to others

Some of life's mysteries are self-revealing – as we stumble along we learn by trial and error. Yet some laws of life are to be revealed because they are counter-intuitive and need us to put aside the demands of the fearful ego. One obvious example is the Golden Rule – do as you'd be done by. The problem with Moses and the Ten Commandments is that such an imposed mandate is quickly warped by power-possessors from spiritual guidelines into enforced regulations. Life certainly has its laws – the law of gravity for example – but these are at another level of truth than the supposed laws of society, which are in fact politically motivated regulations such as the property laws.

Some people take on the responsibility to make known to the world a spiritual code

To climb a mountain and receive a God-given directive that guides and instructs is – at least symbolically – something we are all capable of.

We probably all have such inner, usually hidden, aspirations. With such a divine mandate, a person takes on a higher burden of responsibility as their duty to make known to the world what they believe is a legitimate code by which to live. Certainly this appears to be the case when it is a generally accepted aspect of society that everyone has a right to their point of view about the meaning of life, which right is fiercely defended. This is true whether or not they have the background or intellect to comprehend subtle questions of philosophy or morality.

Ultimately we are given to self-sacrifice – to put aside the fulfilment of personal wants and needs in order to align our purposes with those that we perceive to serve God's will and the greatest common good.

What we enjoy or endure as our experience of life can be considered mundane or spiritual according to our perceptions. The point is to overcome any inclinations of the fearful ego to see itself as more important or less important, and simply see that life itself – in every detail – is potentially a mystical encounter.

The very concept of spirituality needs to be carefully considered. If nothing is spiritual, or if everything is spiritual, then we have no legitimate purpose for the concept of spirituality. Surely, *'is it spiritual or not?'* is a matter of free will? And we are free to choose whether to go through life seeing it all as a spiritual experience.

Why does society create institutions for the welfare of people in need? Is this really the inevitable arising out of the survival instinct, to protect our tribe's genetic bloodline? Some would say it is more properly understood as an expression of the inherent kindness of humanity, a mandate which speaks of our innate spirituality.

Kindness is just one of the many ideals to which a person aspires, which we have collectively adopted as indications of goodness. The very fact of these ideals registers throughout eternity as the signature of humanity's spiritual condition. From time to time these ideals are described and defined by inspired individuals, whom we call prophets and whom we so often raise up as role models and custodians of morality.

PISCES 23

SPIRITIST PHENOMENA

(SENSITIVITY)

RUDHYAR: A "MATERIALISING" MEDIUM GIVING A SÉANCE

THE PRICE OF LIVING IS DYING

Whatever we do passionately puts us in harm's way

Our grasp on the nature of reality is a blend of the intuitive and the taught, and if we want to establish the truth of our unique take on life then we have to substantiate that what we think or feel is true. There are many hopeful people yearning for a new way forward, believing in absurdities and trusting untested intuition to an unrealistic degree. Such blind faith has more to do with blindness than faith. There are more charlatans and fools than there are wise and honest teachers, and even the sincere leaders may be missing various pieces of the jigsaw. The real ones are typified by their willingness to serve often expending significantly of their vital energies.

We tend to make real whatever we imagine

The Spiritists were also called '*sensitives*' – they were exceptionally open to subtle communications from non-physical realms, using Ouija Boards and mesmerism techniques. They teach that spirit reincarnates eternally.

We are subject to processes that condition our perceptions; and we become negatively affected by the stream of difficulties, real or imagined, which life presents to us. As a result of the common pessimism brought to bear upon this mind-training process, confusion and instability are widespread disorders of the general population. Poor mind-management will always result in disorientation, and probably subjugation. The more sensitive we are the more important this becomes because there is danger of a degree of possession when we open up.

Yet when we learn to handle the workings of the mind, we become capable of shaping all situations to suit our values and preferences. It is worth remembering that the mind is sculpted by more than just our thoughts – our feelings are also very influential.

This shaping is done by holding the attention continually upon the configurations of our chosen reality. We need to accept complete responsibility for creating the world in our image of how it should be – and only choosing to see that which reinforces our own positive world-view. This requires exceptional sensitivity, as we attempt to balance external phenomena with internal feelings and find the deepest understanding that links them.

We make real only what we imagine in detail. The forces that support creation need very clear instructions in order to mould specific versions of reality and – for better or for worse – what we hold in our attention becomes those instructions.

If this were not so, then free will and the integrity of the world would be compromised. In order to preserve the orderliness of the universe, there must be a consistent relationship between inner and outer realities. The one is recorded within the contours of the mind, the other in our circumstances, as they unfold into the future.

This process can be expanded, it indicates the way in which we participate consciously in life eternal. We become sensitive to the reality in which there is no end to life, no end to mind – just an eternal continuity that enables us to participate in the immortal truth of being.

PISCES 24

AN INHABITED ISLAND

(CULTIVATION)

RUDHYAR: ON A SMALL ISLAND WITHIN THE VAST EXPANSE OF THE SEA, PEOPLE LIVE IN CLOSE INTERACTION

SELF-IDENTIFICATION

We must relate with others and so the need arises for an acceptable yet authentic identity

In every sense our ego is our version of the truth of life. We cannot grasp reality at all without ego, we cannot interact, we cannot even centralise our own consciousness into any defined point of comprehension. We come to notice that we clash egos with people who significantly differ form us on matter of deepest importance. On a grand scale this explains religious wars and the mutual disgust between the haves and the have-nots. As we mature we soften our insistence upon our version of truth and open up more to the fact that others are free to exercise their right to see things differently to us. They inhabit their little island and we ours.

When we discover new talents we usually improve our circumstances

Humanity is capable of discovering a desert island and making it fit for purpose through our skills at cultivation. Equally, as individuals, we can make any situation work if we use what we know to produce what we need.

We need not get lost in snobbish complacency and self-indulgence, though we can always find a way to function in complete independence of unfriendly elements.

However barren we may find our current life circumstances, they can always be improved. We need to attract and discover the resources we will employ in order to make things happen the way we want them to be. Always around us are people and things that we can usefully involve ourselves with to better our position.

We simply need to capitalise on what we have – to notice our hidden talents and potentials, and to see how they fit the demands of the situation at hand. Very often the talents develop and show themselves to exist as a direct result of our response to situations. On other occasions, having the talents make us look for situations so that we can practise them.

Achievement, of any lasting worth, requires creative opportunism and exceptional inventiveness. We have to rise to the occasion, and actually it is the rising itself that matters.

This is a symbol of self-adequacy. In hard terms, reality objectifies our inner sense of being – so we must rise to outer challenges in order to come to terms with inner limitations. These self-imposed constraints are false, because, on the inner plains of experience, we are beyond all limits.

It is taught – *if we can imagine it, then we can have it.* The very least of our inner promises to ourselves is potentially available if only we would learn to nurse the seedling dream to become ripe fruit.

PISCES 25

THE PURGING OF THE PRIESTHOOD

(REFORMATION)

RUDHYAR: A RELIGIOUS ORGANISATION SUCCEEDS IN OVERCOMING THE CORRUPTING INFLUENCE OF PERVERTED PRACTICES AND MATERIALISED IDEALS

REBOOTING

There will always be corrupting influences; sometimes it is best to restart and refresh

A multitude of minor and major ego-adjustments add up to a life of interactions with family and associates. Yet these processes are not fully sufficient to deal with core issues of our shadow nature. To take us to another level of awareness, wherein we can see ourselves for what we are and let go of the deepest imperfection of being, we need to experience purification. Very often this is 'by fire' – in other words catharsis. We live in a very dark and terrible age and we have to release ourselves from the expectation that that darkness will engulf us. There is hope for the courageous, determined, passionate aspirant – with these qualities we can be free of the corruption that has blinded us from soul consciousness.

We project our disappointments in the manner we treat our priests

In history, the Reformation was a way to purge the priesthood, and is symbolic of the intuitive revolt we all feel against a meaningless, superficial exaltation of human nature, through inadequate or false religious practices.

Blind bigotry and vindictiveness became the norm at a certain period in the development of religion – and shows something of the challenges humanity faces when we attempt to place responsibility upon another person for our own spiritual aspect.

Of course, we need a method to reach an understanding of what values and behaviours we choose to raise up as ideals. This requires that certain individuals, generically called priests, sometimes stand out and speak for us all in some ritualised, sacred way, and generally establish the public face of our collective ideals.

There is danger for them however. This is because we simply will not accept that the elected custodians of our highest invisible treasures will themselves fall short of these ideals.

We demand the absolute integrity for our spiritual leaders so that our immortal insights are secured. We will never tolerate even the slightest depreciation of any of our spiritual potentials, particularly when embodied in our priests and given voice in their words.

Whoever may fail to prove their worth, as guide and mentor, will find they are subject to quite a severe judgement, which gives rise to whatever penalties that await them for their indiscretions. This harsh approach is an intuitive safety measure, felt but rarely consciously understood within society, of the need to guard against the problem of own collective regression.

We forever try to dramatise the dissatisfaction we feel with ourselves – for failing to live up to the potentials we recognise but cannot quite manage to apply – and we project this disappointment in the manner we treat our priests.

PISCES 26 – 30

REALISATION

It is false to insist that there is one version of the meaning of life or anything else; no interpretation will ever be the same for two people because we all have a unique set of experiences and perceptions. Whatever we put out comes back to us and the game is to learn how to create abundance without getting lost in poverty or greed. And the game never ends; as long as there is life then on some level we are free, and yet also obliged, to make it all up the way we expect it to be.

At a certain level of spiritual awareness, we see unambiguously that the non-material aspect to reality is clearly a reflection of the material; those who doubt it are simply given to doubt. That which transcends is not 'subject to'. When we are attached to the world of phenomena, we are subject to pulling and pushing – but it is our choice, because, with spiritual awareness, we are free to detach into the transcendental. It is not something airy-fairy and unattainable; it is the stuff between things, sometimes called Ether. We cannot live there, or even think there – but we can briefly sojourn there, and therefore break patterns of habit and addiction to particular outcomes.

When we do, something profound and worthwhile occurs that has impact upon material reality when we re-engage with our situations. We find ourselves better able to finesse obstacles, to lighten burdens, to know something of the relationship between cause and effect and make a greater indentation upon the hard facts of the matter at hand. It is true that we are in the world, and therefore significantly constrained, but it is by our own choice, and we can strongly influence the extent to which we are subject to causes. We may be in the world, but quintessentially, we are not actually of the world. To live in knowledge of this state is realisation.

PISCES 26

A NEW MOON THAT DIVIDES ITS INFLUENCES

(FINESSE)

RUDHYAR: PEOPLE REALISE THAT THE TIME HAS COME TO GO AHEAD WITH THEIR DIFFERENT PROJECTS

FREEDOM OF CHOICE

Civilisation demands conformity but the soul requires freedom to choose what comes next

If we expect to be able to exercise freedom of choice for ourselves then we must allow that same freedom to others. Therefore the idea that we may require another person to act, feel or think the same way that we do is false. There is of course despotism in the fields of politics and corporate commerce and this is very unfortunate, yet the worst issue is at home. Parenting is so often coercive. It takes a remarkable emotional maturity to allow others to be the way they are and find our adjustment to them.

Deeper realisations enable us to get clearer about our ultimate motives

There are times when it is good to refuse to commit ourselves to any definite course of action, and leave our options open. Sometimes, we just cannot see what path is true and clear, and so it requires a delicate approach. *A new moon that divides its influences* is revealing itself as unsighted – similarly, we may be dividing and therefore concealing our attention at the beginning of things, which may well have merit, as long as we can finesse the situation. We can make a fine skill of uncertainty.

An unthinking, instinctive outreach into the world may or may not actually contribute to a legitimate outcome. Firstly we need to encounter deeper realisations, and perhaps get clearer about our ultimate motives, and then, carefully to live out our fullest response to what we feel is the right thing to do here and now.

It's worth remembering that, since the universality of larger concerns are enacted through smaller matters, personal initiative forms the basic dynamic in any collective scheme of things. So even if we wait a while before acting, it is likely that we will feel the urge to motivate ourselves sooner or later, perhaps even in response to something seemingly trivial.

Sometimes our actions must be tentative until we achieve a sufficiently clear position of self-discovery – so that we can act without ambiguity or confusion.

We seek to do the greatest good for all concerned, with the least expenditure of effort – and yet of course we always favour our own agenda, and try to make sure the cost to us is always outweighed by the potential benefit.

Every emerging potentiality of self can be effectively developed though capitalizing on our ability to bring any state of affairs around to our advantage. Yet timing is crucial – it is best to wait until we are certain before making an irrevocable commitment to a specific path of progression.

The risk is of a completely disruptive vacillation. Our sometime inability to decide must not be allowed to become a fickle way of life – all is then lost; nothing good comes of this attitude to life.

PISCES 27

A HARVEST MOON

(BENEDICTION)

RUDHYAR: THE HARVEST MOON ILLUMINES A CLEAR AUTUMNAL SKY

WE REAP WHAT WE SOW

Everything we do or do not do, say or do not say, adds up to our destiny

Most of us learned I childhood the cocky phrase 'you reap what you sow' often said to point out that whatever occurred was our fault; another version, 'what goes round comes round' indicates the same idea. Today we harvest what we invested before not only in sowing but in cultivating. This understanding makes blame obsolete, no-one has done this to us; we have complete responsibility for it all. To live our lives entirely with this as out guiding principle shows a extraordinary level of attainment and accelerates our path to realisation more than anything else because it goes hand in glove with being truthful.

We celebrate our blessings through gratitude, by taking today's fruits today

There is no need to look to the world at large for emblems of attainment; such proofs of success are, in any case, not sufficiently profound to settle the goal-driven appetites of an ambitious person. There is only one achievement of any real worth, which is the only enduring success, beyond any measure, and that is self-fulfilment.

A harvest moon is an old indicator of the celebration of success; we bring in the fruits of our toil, harvest the reward of our initiative, and feast with our community under the bright, happy full moon. Such moments of culmination in life are more than the cancelling out of old experiences; rather they also stand as the threshold of new achievements to come.

This image speaks of benediction – the gifts of Nature – and Nature says that our productivity is as rich as hers. We can enjoy whatever we can attract, then we can celebrate, and then we can go on to the next cycle of participation in a world of great abundance and available joy. Yet this is not to be seen as exceptional or in doubt; it is our birth right to claim and appreciate.

The lesson here is not to get lost and confused in the welter of opportunity that life throws up. Too often we can continue struggling to achieve something we already have, but are not fully enjoying with our proper attention. The best strategy for success is assumption – behave entirely consistently with the assumption of having reached our goals. We must take today's fruits today, and not lose the rewards by getting caught up in the process of attainment of some speculative future of joy, when joy is actually already at hand.

The highly concentrated resources of the world are at the immediate service of anyone who will put them to use – we take them, we use them, and we don't waste them.

This approach facilitates the replacement of anything used, because it is the innate order of things that whatever we consume appropriately is regenerated by Nature.

In her immeasurable prodigality, Nature is forever showering humanity with products of her untiring creativity. The least we can do is to enjoy it with graceful gratitude.

PISCES 28

A FERTILE GARDEN UNDER THE FULL MOON

(ULTIMACY)

RUDHYAR: A FERTILE GARDEN UNDER THE FULL MOON REVEALS A VARIETY OF FULL-GROWN VEGETABLES

ENOUGH IS A FEAST

Mastering the Earth plane is measured by winning abundance without greed

Sufism teaches of 7 planes of existence, each with its special mystery, and the mystery of the Earth plane is abundance. The self-denial within asceticism may well be an important stage by which we learn to let go of need, but a more advance level of development is typified by having no embarrassment about desire and fulfilment. It takes mastery to cope with both sides of the challenges of physical life. The first test is to determine whether we can create plenty, the next is to learn that the feeling of abundance is not supported by greed; enough is a feast.

Being worldly is quite a blessing, and a spiritual practice for the advanced seeker

Ultimately, plentiful resources and knowledge of worldly processes enable us to serve appropriately, willingly and effectively. Our ability to create wealth becomes an aspect of our sacred service as a spiritual principle.

By keeping a keen eye on the facts of a situation and staying focused, there is a clear tendency to derive abundant rewards, as is suggested by the image of the fullness of the Moon and fertility of a garden. Using worldly goods with integrity, we can avoid pride of possession.

A great deal of personal satisfaction with life can be gained when we focus on outer reality – things and situations. The race survives according to its ability to maintain concentration on hard facts, however relevant our inner reality may be to us.

Through our own day-to-day struggles, we gain deeper insights, and develop a better sense of why so many people suffer. Having our own stresses and strains enables us to understand others with similar challenges – so that a common chord is struck, and rapport develops.

It is entirely meaningful to dedicate ourselves to normal, conventional accomplishments. In fact, on many levels, being ordinary is quite a blessing – those of exceptional ability can so often lose touch with their supportive environment.

Also such normal good fortune is a stabilising factor. Through it, we are easily able to take on board what others, less balanced, may throw at us. Their lack of balance derives from having too wide a variance from the norm, beyond their personal capacity to assimilate the resultant tension.

There is saying in Zen *before enlightenment chop wood carry water, after enlightenment chop wood carry water* – which clearly illustrates the importance of the material world both as a means towards, and celebration of, our highest spiritual station. It is not only foolish and prideful, but counterproductive, to focus our sense of sacredness on prayer alone.

PISCES 29

A PRISM

(VALIDATION)

RUDHYAR: LIGHT BREAKING INTO MANY COLOURS THROUGH A PRISM

UNITY AND DIVERSITY

Two directions concern us, looking for God or looking as if through God's eyes

The white light is divided into a diversity of rainbow colours by a raindrop or a prism and shows clearly the allegory of the relationship between the One and the many. Isn't this what we've been seeking for – the understanding of our relationship with God? God chose to express itself as diversity, the Creator created a multiplicity of facets of itself. We cannot therefore ever expect to end our evolutionary journey – since God itself is not static, The Creator is creative and so always changing its expression like a kaleidoscope. Life itself therefore requires differentiation. We do not know God only by surrendering the self, we need also to express the self creatively.

We need reliable values to navigate the stormy waters of life

The prism is a device created to validate the hypothesis that white light is irrefutably made up of component colours having different wavelengths. This is not something that occasionally changes, according to moods or dates, or even variations in pressure and temperature, but is a fixed point of reference for us all.

The world is essentially stable; we can rely upon normal processes to have normal, appropriate outcomes. It is upon this fact that we have collectively created our understandings about the nature of reality, and how to navigate the stormy waters of physical life.

What we call common knowledge has its foundation in this stability, and normal intelligence then validates our personal experience, by making connection between what we feel, and what we know must be true.

Nature does not amend its working principles willy-nilly, and neither does a mature individual. What is is, and it has a strong inclination to remain so. Existence itself arises out of a set of basic values, which do not change unnecessarily. Through these principles, we are able to maintain a sufficient degree of control over our environment to ensure survival and the accomplishment of our purposes in life.

As years go by, the values by which we live become the qualities that enable us to expand our experience, and develop knowledge, faith and wisdom. The promise of exceptional achievement is made good through the application of remarkably fine judgement, which shows in the finesse we bring to the realisation of our core vision.

Perhaps now we see that the prism image is a metaphor that speaks to us of how Unity is one with diversity, despite appearances. We may also come to see that in fact, whatever we may find close at hand gives evidence to the same cosmic relationship – all is one, and ever has it been so.

Of course when we understand how things work, and are successful at demonstrating this, there exists the danger of pride – the emotion that pushes us to find validation externally in the eyes of others. We need to monitor the effect of our beliefs upon others so that we avoid any presumption and intrusion when we do this.

PISCES 30

THE GREAT STONE FACE

(DISCERNMENT)

RUDHYAR: A MAJESTIC ROCK FORMATION RESEMBLING A FACE IS IDEALISED BY A BOY

BECOMING OUR OWN IDEAL

There is no right answer - we make it all up according to how we feel or think we should

Instead of ending our journey, we find that we have become the seed of yet another cycle of experimentation. We idealise many things – love, truth and God itself for example – and this is how we become aware of our relationship with archetypes. The essential conundrum with which Plato and Aristotle wrestle is whether we create the archetypes or the archetypes create us. The exact same puzzle is posed in the Hindu scripture, the Mahabharata - do we create God or does God create us? This is the mystery of life and, simply put, it is that life is a mystery, a paradox and not within our grasp to understand. Life, God, Oneself…are all beyond our comprehension and yet Divine Curiosity to know more of the eternal paradox is the very motivation that began it all and keeps it all going. What we see when we look is nothing more and nothing less than our expectation.

First imagine, then expect

In a story by American author, Hawthorne, there is a rock formation imagined to resemble the shape and features of a human face. Folklore suggests that one would be born whose features would resemble the Great Stone Face; and be recognised as 'the greatest and noblest personage of his time.' The twist in the story is that a humble young man, who sets out on a quest to find the hero, ends up much later recognised as the hero himself. Yet he walks away still hoping that there would one day appear some wiser and better man than he.

Each of us selects an image within, to which we shape ourselves outwardly, and this is what we come to resemble. The Great Stone Face represents the externalisation of inner aspiration, which subsequently becomes our life goal.

More than anything, we desire to realise in actuality the vision we create of the ideal person – who we would at all costs become. And in normal terms, we find someone to admire whom we wish to copy and eventually equal.

This means constantly expressing the manifestation of our ideal as a normal way of life. Such unwavering integrity – of just being authentic – has an irresistible influence on the course of events. Our own self-idealisation encourages others in their own alignment to eternal reality. This is impactful.

Destiny is then seen as nothing more than character as it most persistently constitutes itself. If we are confused or self-denying, then our creation can be no more than a wholly inarticulate ineffectual self-denigration – otherwise, it can be unsurpassed perfection of human potential. All depends upon our self-created self-image, and our consistent expression of that image into actuality.

It is the essence of human responsibility to act out our personal destiny – and this is an aspect of the immortality of the soul, whenever the soul's destiny aligns with our personal destiny.

Whether we can reach our optimal degree of self-expression depends upon the discernment of two things – envisioning and realizing. First we must imagine, then we must expect – and stay true to that expectation.